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IMRE BANGHA teaches Hungarian at the University of Oxford. His book on the reception of Tagore in Hungary is being brought out by Visva-Bharati. A journalist by profession, SUBHORANJAN DASGUPTA has been an ardent interpreter of Indo-German cultural relations through his translations and critical writings. DENNIS WALKER'S article reached us by post in almost a semi-mutilated condition. Considering the importance of the topic, it was decided to carry the article even though we do not know his institutional affiliations. S. SHIVAPRAKASH did his research on the vachanas which is expected to be published soon. At present he is the Editor of Indian Literature published by Sahitya Akademi. NIRANJAN MOHANTY, Professor of English, Visva-Bharati, is a poet of repute in Indian English. Post-modern literary theory and American literature are his special areas of interest besides translating and writing on Oriya literature in English. SISIR KUMAR DAS is now the President of the Comparative Literature Association of India. He has been requested to contribute the entry on Indian Literature to the forthcoming edition of Encyclopaedia Britannica.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S POETRY IN HUNGARIAN

For the Hungarians in the 1910s and 1920s, Tagore was first of all a prophet of the mysterious East. That is why his thought and the content of his works were far more interesting to most of his translators than the literary forms he used. The translators' work was made more difficult by their lack of knowledge in Bengali. Thus most Hungarian versions of Tagore are based on English prose translations and some on German translations of these English translations. Tagore's thoughts reached the Hungarian readers via foreign languages. The poetic form and rhythm that give intensity and beauty to his Bengali poems were lost. It should be made clear that most of the translations were not by poets of the finest quality. The names of Tagore's most prolific translators vanished and cannot be found in literary encyclopedias today.

In spite of the overwhelming quantity of indifferent early translations, as late as 1961 the influential critic, István Sötér emphasised the unique importance of the Bengali poetic forms used by Rabindranath. Sötér wrote that, "Tagore's lyrics are as much of an erudite piece of work as folk poetry. His poems were written to melody and it is this melody that defines its form and characteristics. In one of his letters Tagore draws a parallel between the poetic form and a streambed that constrains the formless wild waters into a beautiful articulate flow. In Tagore's life similar forms, similar self-imposed runways chiselled on archaic and traditional forms encompass those forces whose sources are untraceable in the deepest thoughts of the people and in the depths of the Indian forests. These forces were set free and organised themselves into some meaning in Tagore's world. This meaning, this reason, this arranging force is the main virtue of the Tagorean thought. In the 1910s and 1920s the European public, thirsty for mysticism, was unable to recognise this virtue." ¹ Sötér's opinion gives us a hint that for certain Hungarians the forms Rabindranath used are at least as important as the contents of his poems. The scarcity of Tagore translations by poets

conscious of the form can explain the decline in Tagore's fame from the late 20s. Although there are stray verses translated from English by eminent poets such as Mihály Babits, Dezső Kosztolányi, Sándor Csoóri, Lajos Áprily, Zoltán Franyó and Sándor Weöres, we can hardly bring together a slim volume of Tagore from these poems.² With the exception of Babits and Kosztolányi all the best translations were prepared when Tagore's fame in Hungary had already declined.

It is interesting to discern two different ways of approach in translating Tagore into Hungarian. The first is that of Babits and Áprily. Three of the poems translated by Babits are from the English *Gitanjali* and one from *The Crescent Moon*³ and Áprily's thirteen poems from *The Gardener*. Both poets stuck closely to the English prose and reflect every aspect of what was beautiful in the English versions. Babits actually seems to have preferred the naïve prose versions to the elaborately simple Bengali originals because they reminded him of the straightforward unornate poetry of Saint Francis of Assisi to whom he likened Tagore, though he was aware of the fact that Tagore was an extremely conscious poet. Needless to say, Tagore's prolific translators followed a similar path as Babits and gave back his poetry in simple Hungarian prose.

There were others who made an effort to move closer to the Bengali original by introducing strophic pattern with metre and rhyme in Hungarian. As early as 1921 Vilmos Zoltán, one of the many prolific translators of Tagore, published some Hungarian versions in verse that he claimed to reflect the Bengali.⁴ Zoltán made his effort on the basis of having heard Rabindranath reciting his poems in Vienna. This pattern was followed by Kosztolányi, who attended Tagore's lecture in Budapest and came out with three verse translations from English.⁵ Kosztolányi felt free not only to create Hungarian strophes but also to change Indian proper names to more exotic sounding ones and to deviate from the original text. He made the poems sound more explicit, more palpable, more tangible. Kosztolányi may have felt justified in his creative approach to the text, too, by the fact that in English Tagore also deviated in form from the Bengali. In the poem 'A hajadér' ('The dancing-girl'), for example, Kosztolányi used ten iambic four-lines stanzas. The names Upagupta and Mathura have been softened to *Ugaponta* and *Madera*

respectively. The young ascetic disciple of Buddha became "The priest of Buddha" and a "Saint". In English, the conversation of the girl and the ascetic is as follows :

"Forgive me young ascetic", said the woman; "graciously come to my house. The dusty earth is not a fit bed for you."

The ascetic answered, "Woman, go on your way ; when the time is ripe I will come to you."

Suddenly the black night showed its teeth in a flash of lightning.

The storm growled from the corner of the sky, and the woman trembled in fear.

In the Hungarian version the dancing girl is more explicit about love and the sadness of the young ascetic suggests that he also had a touch of it. (However, this sadness might also suggest compassion for the sorrow of the dancing girl.) By this sadness the stern figure of the ascetic becomes human, too.

"Mért vagy it, szegény?"

Nem méltó hozzád a por és a bánat,
Ne a port csókold, adj csókot nekem",
..."Csak menj előre lassan, én követlek,
ha kell, melletted termek, gyermekem!"

Szilaj villám nyargalt az égen által
És Ugaponta mélézött tovább,
A lány remegve mekekült hazáig
És ő szomorún nézte lábnyomát.

(*"Why are you here, poor one?"*)

Dust and sorrow are not worthy for you,
Give your kiss not to the dust for me."
..."Go, go ahead, I follow you,
I will be on your side when needed, my child."

A boisterous lightning rode through the sky
And Ugaponta kept on musing,
The girl ran home trembling
And he looked at her footsteps sadly.)

The second conversation in English is as follows :

The ascetic sat by her side, taking her head on his knees, and moistened her lips with water and smeared her body with balm.

"Who are you, merciful one?", asked the woman.

"The time, at last, has come to visit you, and I am here", replied the young ascetic.

The end of the Hungarian poem is more dramatic and has a deeper touch of the transcendental :

Ugaponta fejét ölébe vette.
És ült vele az út porába lent
És megittatta és 'sebét bekente
És megszentelte élejét a Szent.

"Ki vagy?" Kiált a nő, "Irgalmas angyal!"
"Te jó, miért adsz annyi jót nekem?"
"...Mert megígértem, hogyha kell, követlek,
s most itt vagyok melletted, gyermekem."

(Ugaponta took her head into his lap
And was sitting with her down in the dust of the road
And gave her to drink and anointed her body
And the Saint sanctified her life.

"Who are you?", cried the woman, "Compassionate angel!
Good one, why do you give me so much good?"
"... Because I promised; I follow you,
and now I am on your side, my child.")

Kosztolányi's melodious translation also inspired people to set Rabindranath's poetry to music as is testified by a letter of a person called György Káldas ⁶ who was a composer of some Hungarian songs in the folk style. Káldas set to music Kosztolányi's translation of the *Blind girl*.

Sándor Weöres (1913-89), an insuperable virtuoso of the Hungarian language, was deeply influenced by Taoism and Buddhism. He widely translated Sanskrit poetry relying on prose translations prepared by a Sanskrit scholar, József Vekerdi. His masterpiece in this field is the Hungarian *Gīta-govinda*, in which he sticks not only to the rhythm of

the original but also to a style abounding in compounds. And all this is done in a beautifully flowing language. Weöres translated a short poem of Tagore lead by aesthetic reasons similar to those of Kosztolányi. Weöres prepared a three-stanza translation of the fifty-second poem ('*Why did the lamp go out?*') of *The Gardener*. The Bengali original ('*Durākāñksā*' from *Citrā*), however, has four four-line stanzas.

Keno nibe gelo bāti I āmi adhik yatane ekechinu tāre jāgiyā bāsararāti. tāo nibe gelo bāti I	Why did the lamp go out? I covered it with much effort awake day and night, that is why the lamp went out.
Keno jhare gelo phul I āmi bakṣe cāpiyā dharechine tāre cintita bhayākul. tāo jhare gelo phul I	Why did the flower fade away? I kept it pressed to my chest anxiously and fearfully. that is why the flower faded away.
keno mare gelo nadā I āmi bādhi bādhi tāre cāhi dharibāre pāibae nirabadhi. tāo mare gelo nadā I	Why did the river dry up? I want to hold it by binding it and get it always, that is why the river dried up.
keno chiṛe gelo tār I āmi adhik ābege prā'yapa'ya bole diyechinu jhañkāra, tāo chiṛe gelo tār I	Why did the string break? I —very passionately and desperately stroke a note (on it). that is why the string broke.

In the Bengali the second line has a special function. The pronoun I stands apart from the rest of this unrhyming long line thus introducing a break into the flow of the stanza. This function of the second line with the word I is maintained in all four stanzas. The Bengali reader feels that something is not in its place. In the English version this peculiarity is lost. Nevertheless, the lack of strong emphasis on the negative aspect of I is not felt as a mistake since in Indian thought the Ego (*ahamkāra*) is an obstacle in recognising the true nature of one's self and thus being the source of all suffering it has more negative connotations than in Europe.

The English prose suggests a strong rhythm of thought with a verse pattern, which makes this poem perhaps the only one in Tagore's English versions that most closely leans towards verse.

Why did the lamp go out?

I shaded it with my cloak to save it from the wind, that is why the lamp went out.

Why did the flower fade?

I pressed it to my heart with anxious love, that is why the flower faded.

Why did the stream dry up?

I put a dam across it to have it for my use, that why the stream dried up.

Why did the harp-string break?

I tried to force a note that was beyond us power that as why the harp-strings is broken.

Weöres made the poem even more compact by omitting the second "stanza" of the English and making three three-line verses by breaking the second sentence into two at the phrase 'that is why'. Moreover he repeated the word *why* and *that is why* at the end of every first and third line respectively thus creating three equal lines of ten iambic syllables.

Miért aludt el a mécs-láng, miért?

Szellőtő I óvtam a köpenyemmel.

Ezért aludt el a mécs-láng, ezért.

Miért száradt ki a folyó, miért?

Gátat vontam rá, hogy enyém legyen.

Ezért száradt ki folyó, ezért.

Miért pattant el a lant-húr, miért?

Oly dalba fogtam, nem bírta jármát.

Ezért pattant el a lant-húr, ezért.

(Why did the flame of the lamp go out, why?

I protected it from wind with my cloak,

That is why the flame of the lamp went out, that is why.

*Why did the river dry up, why?
I put a dam on it to have it for me,
That is why the river dried up, that is why.*

*Why did the lute-string break, why?
I took up a song the yoke of which it could not hold.
That is why the lute-string broke, that is why.)*

In his translation Weöres without knowing the original reached closer to the Bengali version in which the "that is why" sentence is a separate line rhyming with the first but not with the second.

During the communist period it was naturally not only Rabindranath's world view that had to undergo communist reinterpretation but also his poetry. The finest example of such reinterpretation can be found in the work of Zoltán Franyó. Franyó (1887-1978) was a poet from Transylvania (after 1919 in Rumania) who was influenced by the communist ideology. The Hungarian version of five Tagore-poems can be found in a selection of his translations.⁷ There might be some more poems published in periodicals too. As is the case with a poem that appeared in Hungarian under the title *people of work*,⁸ which is a good example of how Tagore can be interpreted as a communist. The Hungarian is in iambic four-line stanzas with rhyming couplets. Franyó, as all other contemporary translators, worked from the English. Sometimes added and sometimes changed lines. In the following quotation the Bengali poet states that the British will not escape the force of time that demolishes empires; however the nameless people linked to the earth by their work, are never swept away by historical changes :

<i>Jāni tāro patha diye baye yābe kāl</i>	I know time will also flow on their way
<i>Kothāy bhāsāye debe sāmrajyer des' beāā jāl.</i>	And will sweep away the country-wide net of empire.
<i>Jāni tar panyabāhī senā</i>	I know their army bearing merchandise
<i>Jyotiṣkaloker pathe rekhāmātra cihna rākhibe nā.</i>	Will not leave a sign behind on the path of the heavenly bodies.
<i>Māṭir pṛithivapāne ānkhī meli yabe Dekhi sethā kalakalarabe</i>	When I look down the earth I see there a multitude of people

*Yugyugāntar hate mānuṣer nitya
prayojane.*

*Jivane maraṇe
Orā cirakāl
ṭane jāl, dhare thājke hāl.
Orā māṭhe māṭhe
Bij bone, pākā dhān kāṭe.
Orā kāj kare
Nagare prāntare.*

Proceeding in uproar
On many ways in different
groups
Under the eternal necessities of
mankind
In life and in death
For ever they
Pull the oars, keep holding the plough
On the fields
They sow seeds, cut the ripe paddy
They work
In twons and the country.

The English version, Franyó worked from run as follows :

*Throught their path to will flow Time's current
sweeping away the country-wide nets of empire.
Their troops bearing merchandise,
will leave not a sign behind them
on the empty path of the starry realm.*

*When on this Earth I cast my eyes,
great multitudes I see there
moving with tumult,
along diverse paths in many a group,
from age to age,
urged by mankind's daily need in life,
and in death.*

*They, ever,
pull the oars, keep holding the helm ;
they, in the fields,
sow seeds, cut the corn.
They go on working.*

The Hungarian version :

*Habár hatalmuk óriásra nőtt fell :
A véletlen segített, és idővel
A nép közös rohamával vágta át
A gyarmatok sötét hálózataát.*

*E rab világnak már örökre vége ;
A döre fegyverdörgés ellenére
Népünket együtt visszük századok
Nagy távlatába, hol még felragyog.*

*Sosem henýél az, — mindig, nappal-éjjel
Sok század óra munkájából éldel.
Dicsőség dolgozóinknak! Sosem
Feledjük, mennyi volt a gyötirelem!*

*Ma másképp dolgozzák meg ök a földet,
Örülnek, bár a válluk mélyre görnyed,
A hö közösség ad csodás erőt;—
S e kép merül fel most szemem előtt :*

*Although their power grew enormous
Coincidence helped and later
The people cut through with united force
The dark web of colonies.*

*This fettered word is over for ever ;
And in spite of useless rumbling of weapons
We take our people to the great perspective
Of centuries, where it will shine forth.*

*That never shirks—always, day and night,
For long centuries has been living on his work.
Glory to our workers! We will never
Forget how much the suffering was!*

*Today another way they work the earth,
They are happy, though their shoulders stoops deep,
The faithful company gives them miraculous power ;
And this image emerges in my eyes :*

Similarly, Franyó's article on Tagore⁹ in 1961 is a good example of how the Bengali poet can be shown as a person developing towards communist ideas. "The way that Rabindranath Tagore later found viable was not the cloud-adventure of the transcendentalist denial of life. He again defied the colonial tyranny and threw his previously acquired knighthood down at the feet of the British. During a visit to Germany

and Italy Rabindranath Tagore recognised with disgust and dread the great danger of Fascism threatening mankind and leading to war. At the same time his visit to the Soviet Union made him a friend of the Soviet people.... In his articles and poems he protested against the Fascist aggression in Abyssinia and China.”

Although not as much as in the twenties or in 1961, Tagore is present in Hungarian life even today. In addition to occasional articles about him, some of his works have been published again, especially in the nineties. The overwhelming majority of the translations, however, are still via English and other languages.

Two important later translators are Lajos Áprily and Sándor Csoóri. Lajos Áprily (1887-1967) was another poet from Transylvania who had aesthetic views similar to that of the *Nyugat*-circle. He translated thirteen poems from the *Gardener*. Áprily's Hungarian follows the English both in form and in contents and in this way he can be considered a follower of Babits. Sándor Csoóri (b. 1930), the secretary of the World Association of Hungarians came out with a Hungarian version of Tagore's "Africa".

It should also be mentioned as a curiosity that not only Hungarian versions were prepared in Hungary. Two poems by Tagore, entitled "The Young Prince" and "The Gardener and the Queen" were translated into Esperanto in an anthology.¹⁰

Translations from the Original Bengali

An initiative has also been made to translate poetry from the original Bengali. For the exhibition, commemorating the 50th anniversary of Rabindranath's death, a song (*Gāner bhitar diye jakhan dekhi bhubankhāni...*) was translated into Hungarian by József Vekerdi and Imre Bangha.¹¹ In 1997, a prose poem from *Lipikā* and a few free verses from *Punaśca. Śyāmalī* and *Śeṣ Lekhā* translated by Imre Bangha were published in Hungarian in a literary magazine.¹² It is only natural that there is a large scope for exploiting the possibilities for the translation of Bengali poetry into Hungarian. The Hungarian translation could bring over certain features of the original, which are not always easy to convey in other European languages. Unlike most European tongues, Hungarian

does not need to rely only on sequences of stressed and unstressed syllables for rhythm. It can be produced by sequences of short and long syllables (Bengali *Kalāvṛtta*) or of stressed and optional syllables. Accent in Hungarian, as in most cases of Bengali, is always on the first syllable. Thus the beginning of a beat usually corresponds to the beginning of a new word. In this way a similar beat is created to that of counting of syllables (Bengali *dalavṛtta*). (Only the Bengali *miśravṛtta* rhythm cannot be rendered closely into Hungarian due to the excess of short syllables in Bengali.)

As has been mentioned, there is a strong tradition of translation in Hungary, in which a high standard is set. Although it might seem odd to the English reader terrified by nursery rhyme like translations, in Hungary not only the meaning and style have to reflect closely the original but the form also should be as close as possible. Prose translation of rhythmic poetry, for example, is not accepted as literature and even unrhymed translation of rhyming verses is bound to receive strong criticism.

From the distance of four decades, we can observe that verse translations of Tagore have far stronger appeal than the prose ones. Good verse translators into Hungarian, however, was possible only with a creative approach to the English prose text and the translators had to make minor or major changes into the poems. These changes were normally meant to enhance the poetic value of the Hungarian but sometimes major alterations were introduced out of ideological reason and Tagore's voice was lost. The beauty of certain Hungarian verse translations does not let the reader get that in the most valuable part of Rabindranath that was in his Bengali poetry—form and content in the organic unity. This deep unity of form and content makes Rabindranath's Bengali poems true poems in world literature.

NOTES

1. István-Sötér : 'Rabindranath Tagore' in *Élet és Irodalom* 19, 1961, p. 7.
2. These translations (except Zoltán Franyó's six poems as well as Sándor Csoóri's *Afrika*) are published in Gy. Wojtilla (ed.): *Rabindranath Tagore*.

Veszprém, 1991. Zoltán Franyó's translations are found in Zoltán Franyó, *Lírai világtájak : Válogatott műfordítások*. Európa, Budapest, 1967, pp. 266-69. 'The people of work' was printed in *Kisalföld*, 4 June 1961, p. 4. Sándor Csoóri's in *Haldokló bilincsek*. Ecclesia, Budapest, 1968, pp. 162-63.

3. The poems *Gitanjali* XCV, CLL and *The Crescent Moon* : "when I bring you coloured toys" were published in 'Rabindranath Tagore verseiből' (From the poems of Rabindranath Tagore) in *Vasárnapi Újság*, 30 Nov. 1913, p. 949 and the *Gitanjali* CI at the end of the article 'két szent' (Two Saints), in *Nyugat*, 23, 1913, pp. 733-36. The latter has so far escaped the attention of Babits's editors and has not been included into the volume of his collected translations.

4. Vilmos Zoltán : 'Rabindranáth Tagore és a verses magyar Tagore-fordítás' in *Nyugat* 14, 1921, pp. 1126-27.

5. The three poems *A bajadér* ('The Dancing-girl', *Fruit Gathering* XXXVII), *Vak leány* ('Blind girl' *Gardener* LVIII) and *Lámpa az útra* ('Lamp for the way', *Gardener* LXII) can be found in Dezső Kosztolányi : *Idegen Költők*. Szépirodalmi Kiadó, Budapest, 1966, pp. 603-05.

6. 'Hungary' file of the Archives of the Rabindra-Bhavana.

7. Three poems are from the English *Gitanjali* jön (XLV : Have you not heard his silent steps?), *Hiába várlak* (XVIII : Clouds heap upon clouds), *A rabtartó rabsága* (XXXI : "Prisoner, tell me who was it that bound you?"), and two from other collections : *A föld drága pora* ("The Dear dust of Earth" : Everything is beautiful of Earth), *A föltámadt ember* ("The Resurrected man" : Look, here he comes) are found in Zoltán Franyó : *Lírai világtájak : Válogatott műfordítások*. Európa, Budapest, 1967, pp. 266-69. (I was not able to trace the English source of the lost two poems.)

8. The original is poem Nr. 10 in *Ārogya* (*Orā kāj kare*), which is published as Nr. 121 in the English *Poems*, Visva-Bharati, Calcutta, 1943, p. 204-07. The Hungarian version is found in *Kisalföld*, the daily published from the town of Győr 4 July 1961, p. 8.

9. The article is published in the daily *Kisalföld*, 4 July 1961, p. 8.

10. K. Kalocsay : *Tutmonda Sonoro : Poezia antologio en Esperanto tradukita el 30 hungvoj* Hungara Esperanto Asocio, Budapest, 1981. (Information courtesy Dr. Martin Kämpehen.)

11. The translation was printed on the invitation card of the exhibition.

12. 'Bengáli versek', in *Életünk*, Dec. 1997, pp. 1240-46.

Subhoranjan Dasgupta

ICON NOT TOO HIGH : READERS' AND PUBLISHERS' RESPONSE

*Elias is imprisoned in his own self-created attic (chilekotha).
That is why he is immersed in his daydreams (khowab).*

Mijanur Rahman Khan (young journalist)

*Elias is our destiny. We have to read him again and again
as we read Dostoyevsky. He, only he, inspires us to dream.*

Aditi Falguni (young student)

Consider two contrasting scenarios :

Scenario 1 (Madhu's canteen inside the campus of Dhaka University).

Young Leftist students within the agespan of 18 and 22 have assembled in this historic canteen, a witness to many uprisings and repressions, to comment on Akhtaruzzaman Elias' creativity and commitment. These activists immersed in their dream of a people's democratic revolution are not only against the Awami League and Bangladesh National Party but are also sharply critical of the recognized leftist groups and their leaders. The latter, according to them, have betrayed the cause of revolution. In fact, the most eloquent spokesman among these iconoclasts, Mabinur Rahman, condemns every political leader of the leftist hue, from Rashed Khan Memon of Workers' Party to the father-figure Badruddin Umar. Why? Because all of them, without exception, do not practise what they preach and, to that extent, they are all traitors.

But all the young ones—Mabinur Rahman representing the fragment Biplabi Chhatra Maitri (Revolutionary Students' Friendship), Shamim Ara of Chittagong who is the editor of the magazine 'Addarup', Arshad Siddique who belongs to the Jatiya Gana Front (National People's Front), Aditi Falguni and Elias' own student Abu Rushd—revere Akhtaruzzaman

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Elias as a demigod. Several interconnected reasons explain this reverence and they together constitute the young leftists' reaction to Elias. Aditi Falguni says, "Elias is our destiny. We have to return to him again and again as we return to Dostoyevsky. Elias provokes us to dream, to dream of a classless world." Abu Rushd recollects, "He was a great teacher, he formed our consciousness. He taught Syed Waliullah's 'Lal Salu' and in his lectures repeatedly reminded us of Waliullah's historic observation—in this country nasty weeds of religion outnumber the weeds of mustard plants." Arshad Siddique hopes, "We are still waiting for that phase of commitment in our country which will turn Elias, the writer, to an indispensable guide. We are fully aware of the despairing situation in which we live. But we still believe that we can march forward and Elias is our companion in this march." Finally, Mabinur Rahman asserts, "Elias was never an activist in the complete sense of the term. But he never claimed to be one like others. He did not exhort us to do things which he himself could not do. He was hundred percent honest and genuine. And that is why he is an asset in our struggle."

But how long will or can this struggle continue? To this sceptical query the answer is, "we do not know. Our zeal might also wane at some point of time. But at this moment we believe like Elias that the parliamentary path will not lead to socialism. An armed uprising is essential. We dream of it and like Maxim Gorky, Elias is an irrepressible force sustaining our dream. And if, one day, our dream dilutes into *khowab*, even then Elias will be our elegist." Evidently, these firebrands condemn others "who are trying to appropriate Elias to serve their own ends." These others either highlight Elias' aesthetic excellence at the expense of his political commitment to transform him into an apolitical cultural hero or twist his ideology to enforce a link between his cosmovision and their own.

Scenario 2 (Elias' modest flat in Azimpur Colony).

The day is January 4, 1997. Elias' body rests inside the flat and many admirers are coming to pay their last respect. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, cancels her prior programme and arrives. Some diehard leftists are not elated by her presence but there is no doubt that the lady is in a state of sorrow. In a voice filled with emotion

she says, "Elias' death means we have lost a powerful writer who was not only close to life and actuality but also an inspired commentator of our war of liberation. His death means a terrible loss for Bengali language, literature. Indeed, the vacuum can hardly be filled. I feel that I have lost a dear relative of mine. My father, Sheikh Mujib, and his father, B. M. Elias, were close friends. As student-activists they worked together in undivided India and even later they were close colleagues." Sheikh Hasina leaves after paying her homage but the common people in the housing colony can hardly afford to forget that she came once to visit a writer who was their neighbour. Hence, if you have any difficulty in locating the flat of the deceased writer where his wife and son still reside, you need to place the query, "could you show me the flat where the Prime Minister came?" Almost everyone, even those who have not read a line of Elias or ever will read, will bring you to the doorstep.

These two reactions form two types of readers diametrically opposed to each other in political terms prove that it is not possible for any political being in Bangladesh to remain indifferent to Elias' texts. While the attempt on the part of the student-activists to identify themselves with Elias' creative mission is understandable and expected, the fulsome appreciation voiced by Sheikh Hasina could wellnigh raise a few eyebrows, because Elias was stringently opposed to Awami League politics. He believed that the war of liberation would and could have attained a clear socialist accent had the Awami League not hijacked it with the devouring slogan of Bengali nationalism. Like Badruddin Umar and many other leftist intellectuals, Elias also castigated post-liberation Awami politics in the harshest of terms. His short stories 'Khoari' and 'Dakhal'—to name only two—are unforgiving testaments of his point of view. Sheikh Hasina was aware of this opposition, but it did not deter her from coming to Elias' flat. Simply because as a writer Elias stood miles above the rest. His originality, distinction, power and dedication had to be recognized and applauded, he himself blocked the option of bypassing him. Sheikh Hasina's tribute, however, was not entirely apolitical. She did associate Elias, and rightly, with the spirit and fervour of liberation but her ministerial colleague Motia Chaudhury, Minister of Food and Agriculture, did not hesitate to say, "I do not count

Elias' politics when I read his books. I have read his 'Chilekothar Sepai', the sheer aesthetic brilliance of this novel is astounding. He is so close to life, he is so palpable and existential and the mastery with which he transmutes this nearness to art—that is important. In this respect he recalls that other pillar, Manik Bandyopadhyay."

No wonder, even the Islamic fundamentalists had to take note of Elias in spite of their grave reluctance. *Dainik Sangram*, one of their mouthpieces, printed a small news item of January 5 which stated, "As an able short story writer and novelist, Elias was wellknown in Bangladesh and West Bengal." Another spokesman, *Dainik Inquilab*, described him as a distinctive writer. But on January 9, a critic Kayes Mahmud penned an evaluation which amply revealed the distaste fundamentalists nourished against him. After paying grudging compliments to his social awareness and sense of commitment, the critic singled out Elias' attitude towards religion and god as well as towards man-woman relationship for special ridicule. Obviously, Elias' comments on these two sensitive issues posed a challenge to the fundamentalist position. Elias had merely said, "Religion to me is no great factor, a creative being has no need for god" and, "if a man and woman wish to come together voluntarily, the society and its mores should cause no great problem." Kayes Mahmud quoted these two 'unholy' statements, linked him with Taslima Nasreen, the arch-defiler, who said something similar, and discovered the handiwork of a foreign power (India) behind promoting them both. There was an element of pity for Elias too. Kayes Mahmud commiserated by saying, "His unilinear social perspective kept his creative being confined in one scabbard. As a result, even a powerful writer like him got tied to a single orbit." There was a way out of this impasse—Elias should have submitted to the will of the Almighty God instead of getting too friendly with another defiler Mahasveta Devi, who took him for an irreligious ride.

What is noteworthy in this clever dissection is the repeated recognition of Elias as an exceptional writer and the latent lament that he did not employ his prowess to spread the message of Islamic fundamentalism. According to Anu Mohammad, and active member of the Lekhak Sibir Organisation, the fundamentalists often tried to trap Elias while he was living and once accused him of saying that *ajun* should

not be broadcast over the radio. But their opposition failed to turn into a violent outrage because Elias never mocked the beliefs of others as Taslima Nasreen flagrantly did. He was catholic and compassionate and, to quote his wife Suraiya Elias, "never interfered with the private religious practice of others." Neither could the fundamentalists stomach his refined iconoclasm nor launch a jihad against him. They had to accept the distinctive force of his creativity and weave a tortuous argument after his death to mock his ideology. The biggest joke on the fundamentalists was played by the student-activists. They added the misleading 'Hazrat' to Elias' name and asked a bookstore run by the fundamentalists if they had the 'Khowabnama' written by this holy Elias. The bookseller promised that he would get the book from Saudi Arabia! Elias, then, was a crafty weapon in the hands of the students to dupe the fundamentalists.

Only the fundamentalists were shocked by Elias' emphatic distance from religion and rituals. Other readers with whom I spoke and who were practising Muslims themselves were not willing to attach any importance whatsoever to his agnostic or atheistic leanings. They expressed divergent opinions on whether Elias has already turned into a classic or not, on Elias' transformation into a myth, on the comparative merits of his short stories and novels, on the subject of complexity and on his reach among readers, but none criticized him for his irreverence. This unanimity proved that Jamaat-i-Islami's lament over Elias' faithlessness failed to secure the slightest response. Even the young journalist and writer Mijanur Rahman Khan who was highly critical of his novels ("Elias is a minority writer, he is confined in his attic and dreams his khowab") applauded his effort to run down fanaticism in his short stories and novels. Incidentally, Mijanur authored a book against the fatwa-givers and he found Elias' short stories quite inspiring because there, and not in his novels, he could identify himself with the post-liberation reality and dream-deprived characters. What was Mijanur's specific grievance against Elias? In his words, "I find difficult to proceed. For example, I have read 'Chilekothar Sepai' till the first 200 pages but then I have got stuck."

Masuda Banu Farooq, NGO activist, also read the first half of the same novel. She halted midway like Mijanur, though she realized that

Elias could not be read at a gallop. Recalling her experience as a reader, this lady said, "The smell and taste of reality is spread across his pages. To appreciate this element, I have to read Elias slowly, digest and then analyse. But for this I need a lot of time. Moreover, Elias provokes you to think. How many writers provoke us to think, they are all running after money and writing potboilers." In other words, this busy NGO activist who had to care for her handicapped child was full of praise for Elias' extraordinary output. She regarded his seriousness and dedication as a writer as something exceptional in the age of quickies and was prepared to wait for that phase in her life when she would have the time to read Elias in the way he ought to be read. Other women, engaged in their professions, echoed Masuda Banu's comment. In point of fact, those who had proceeded halfway like her felt a trifle ashamed. As though, they have not done their duty. Such reactions point to the fact that Elias is not confined to highbrow intellectuals only, middle class Bengali women are drawn towards his novels as well. A housewife in Jamshedpur, Reba Lala, devoted to serious reading, had to say something similar : "I am still reading his 'khowabnama', and very slowly, otherwise I shall miss the stylistic beauty." She was in a position to recall the exact images Elias had used. Elias, like Marcel Proust perhaps, or like Thomas Mann, promises no rapid, thoughtless reading. At the same time, he casts a slow but sure spell on his readers.

This entire debate over Elias' real or apparent complexity was aptly summed up by a senior official of Bangladesh Betar, Shajahan Farooq. He posed the challenging query, "Could you name one major, immortal writer who promises an easy reading? Shakespeare, Tagore? Elias is a major writer and what is remarkable about his creativity is that we used to read his short stories at lightning speed when we were students. But even these offered no smooth sail. Then why did we read? Precisely because he was so novel yet so true to life." Unlike Mijanur, this reader did not find 'Chilekothar Speai' at all complex. Honouring this novel as a unique reflection of the people's movement of 1969, he made a distinction between Akhtaruzzaman Elias and Kamalkumar Majumdar, "Kamalkumar is really complex. You have to engage in high-powered mental gymnastics to grasp what he is writing. But that is not the case with Elias. A Bengali will not lose much if he does not read Kamalkumar

but will suffer an irreparable loss if he does not read Elias." Words like these uttered spontaneously and with no desire to impress underlined Elias' worth. Shahjahan Farooq's reaction represented the attitude of the cultivated, urban, middle class Bengali in Dhaka and Chittagong towards Elias. Nor was this section in either Bangladesh or West Bengal unduly disturbed by his so-called lack of popularity. Again, by voicing a counter query on this issue, Shahjahan Farooq asked, "He is not as popular as Humayun Ahmed, Imdad-ul-Haq Milan, Sunil Gangopadhyay and the rest. So what? Does he need to be as popular as them? How many in Europe have read James Joyce and Samuel Beckett? Does mere number ensure immortality?" This reader is reading 'Khowabnama' at his chosen pace: "I do not want to race through it. I will read it slowly and deliberately to digest the layers of history, politics and above all, literary brilliance."

There was distinct echo of Shahjahan's view in the opinion of Munim Habbib, journalist and freedom fighter. He said that every Tom, Dick and Harry would not discuss Elias but any serious appraisal of modern Bengali literature would take him into account, inescapably. However, the Toms, Dicks and Harrys would continue to salute him and shower praises because Bengalis, by nature, loved to deify their heroes, even authors unread. By charting this line of demarcation between appreciative reading which has already given Elias' texts the honour of classics and infectious name-dropping which sustains a myth, Munim Habbib drew our attention to the dual stature of Elias. At one level, his texts are regarded as classics by some (especially *Khowabnama*) and, at another level, the person is valued as a myth. Politicians heaped praises on the myth after his death, fellow writers rained eulogies on his memorable texts. Both combined to turn him into a cult figure in West Bengal and Bangladesh. So much so that busy bureaucrats would also say, "Yes, of course, I have read Elias, partly though when his novels were serialized in the dailies." One administrator was candid enough to say that the storm raised by the young generation impelled him to read Elias' short stories.

There is no doubt that the excitement of the young readers, many of them still in their teens, contributed, in a large measure, to the read or unread or halfread apotheosis of Elias. It would be wrong to suggest

that only dissident left student-rebels found in him their hero. That is not the case. Even a student of engineering like Tanvir Iqbal Farooq read *Chilekothar Sepai* in 1993 when he was only 17 years old. He enjoyed every bit of it because, "The entire breadth and depth of that historic movement was captured in that masterpiece." Tanvir will read Elias and Manik Bandyopadhyay if he finds time but not Humayun Ahmed. There are many others like him, if one is prepared to accept the hard evidence of another young enthusiast Mohammed Zahid Hussain, a student of journalism. Zahid Hussain recollected, "We opened a stall in the Book Fair when Elias was living. That is, when a combination of several factors had not turned him into a myth as yet. Even then, his books sold well. And mind you, we sold his books without the help of costly ads. Which means he had reached the readers without the support of media. The buyers were mostly young students. Even after his death, the readership pattern has not changed basically. Last year, for example, in the Book Fair, most readers were under 30." But how did the message get around? "Very simple," said Sonia Sultana Ashraf, a student of political science, "Those who read and were enthralled asked others to read. He gave us such a jolt, that we felt obliged to tell others that they must read." This mouth-to-mouth campaign conducted as love's labour by Elias' admirers, mostly young, formed the first layer in the myth-making process. It adequately proved Suraiya Elias' claim, "My husband always kept a scrupulous distance from the media—specially television. He refused to be in the glare of limelight." In spite of this self-effacing effort on his part, in both Bengals, the number of his admirers grew steadily, if not by leaps.

Leftist intellectuals like Sirajul Islam Chaudhury and Ahmed Rafique pinpointed the reasons which coalesced to turn the diffident middle class college teacher Elias into a myth. Ahmed Rafique said : (1) The readers could identify themselves with the explosive movement of 1969 which is the stuff of *Chilekothar Sepai*. Especially the young generation discovered in him a unique narrator who could fuse history or the past with a vision. (2) His receiving several literary awards in Bangladesh and Ananda Purashkar in West Bengal marked him out as a literary figure whose excellence demanded laurels. (3) The cruel assault of cancer and his untimely death added to the aura that surrounded him.

Elias wanted to live desperately a few years more to write his novel on the war of liberation ; readers craved to read it for that would have been the sequel to the two written earlier but Death, the arbiter, stood in the way. This intervention which thwarted a creative mission turned him into a tragic figure. The last image that his readers still cherish of him is that of a sick man, deprived of one leg, expressing the intense desire to write. As his colleague of Lekhak Shibir, Anu Mohammed, recalled, "Right at the end we could only hear his sounds of agony." He struggled to say something but we could hardly hear. But from the sounds uttered we could decipher only three words 'Tutun, Kagoj, Kalam'.

Agreeing to the analysis of Ahmed Rafique, Sirajul Islam Chaudhury added that the media which Elias has spurned during his lifetime took him up with adulatory vengeance after his death. He could not be more correct. Each and every Bengali newspaper of Dhaka (minus the mouthpieces of the fundamentalists) thought it proper to publish his news of death on the first page and this was followed by feature articles in subsequent days. Radio and television also swooped in with even foreign radio stations like the BBC and Voice of Germany paying glowing tributes. The eyes of the television are still fixed on him. While I was talking with Suraiya Elias the telephone rang and the speaker on the other side was a producer from Bangladesh Television eager to set parts of *Chilekothar Sepai* into a teledrama. Elias had predicted this outcome. He told his wife, "Mark my words. After my death publishers and the media will come to you. Publishers will offer you money. As for the media, don't entertain them."

Two other factors which enlarged the myth, according to Sirajul Islam Chaudhury, were the political focus on him after his death and the sincere efforts made by Lekhak Shibir to spread and perpetuate his name. Almost every political celebrity in Bangladesh, from the President of the Republic, Mr. Shahabuddin Ahmed, to the leader of the Workers' Party Rashed Khan Memon, voiced heartfelt praises when they heard about his death. Moreover, as stressed by Kazi ABM Iqbal of Lekhak Shibir, "Elias was one of our pillars. His creativity was intimately connected with our organisation, with our magazine *Trinamul*. So, wherever we go now (as in the past) we take him with us." Badruddin

Umar, guide of Lekhak Shibir and friend of Elias, had this to say on Elias' committed creativity : "He died at that crucial juncture when he had just arrived at a new phase of his creativity. He was that writer of our time who simply had no rival." Though not as effusive as Badruddin Umar, both Ahmed Rafique and Sirajul Islam Chaudhury attested to Elias' creative brilliance. The former observed that *Khowabnama*, a more satisfying work than *Chilekothar Sepai*, could become a classic and the latter said that he was proceeding towards the creating of a classic after writing two novels which had articulated the promise of a classic. Both lamented his untimely exit from the literary world as an irreparable loss.

Hassan Azizul Haq, renowned short story writer and essayist, would prefer not to use the word 'classic'. But he is convinced that Elias has carved out a permanent place in the history of Bengali literature on the basis of the two novels he wrote. This permanence is not at all dependent on the popular reception often accorded to an author. In fact, in Haq's opinion, "Elias will never be as popular as Saratchandra though his idiom, especially his use of the language of the common people can take him to the remote corners of the country." Ultimately, he will be remembered in the way Manik Bandyopadhyay and Syed Waliullah are cherished, as writers who can defy the onslaught of time with the help of a few timeless books. "Ideology will not play a determining role here," commented Haq because there is no point in denying the fact that Elias' emancipatory vision is not reflected in presentday Bangladesh. Indeed, those who had criticized *Chilekothar Sepai* for its political point of view, "those bourgeois organisations" to borrow the words of Elias himself, have gradually forgotten the sting of the political lash and are now regarding the novel as the unforgettable document of a people's struggle. Emphasising this change in reception, Haq said, "The picture has changed. Now the stress is on his literary merit. Politics has been relegated to the background. Perhaps, even this truncated sort of enthusiasm is better than indifference."

Such observations underline the 'depoliticisation' of the author whose breath of life, ironically, was emancipatory politics. Such a subtraction is also inescapable when a powerful and breakaway writer castigating actuality is incorporated by the same actuality as a myth.

In other words, once the literary figure is enveloped in an aura and the literary text becomes a classic, the Utopian strain turns into a harmless note deprived of its challenging impulse. The promise of revolutionary praxis is reduced to an aesthetics of reflective resistance. Those student-activists I met in Madhu's canteen and a poet like Farhad Mazhar are opposed to this continuing apolitical apotheosis of the vibrantly political Elias. Farhad Mazhar labels this effort to deify as a 'trap' and advocates, "It is difficult to absorb Elias without receiving a definite political education...we should not read him merely as a novelist." But, is it at all possible to receive the proper political education in the present reality? Farhad Majhar himself answers this question in a moving poem dedicated to the novelist. He places Elias, in a pronouncedly elegiac tone, in the antithetical reality which is all-encompassing and wonders what would happen to Elias' texts and his own poem in this world :

Our days are wrapped in the ads of Coca Cola
 Our nights are luminous with the bulbs of Philips
 Elias, we have resolved the mystery of poverty eradication
 Even the poor accept our plan
 We have our World Bank, we have our IMF
 We have our WTO... .

This adversarial world and the pulp literature it encourages creates a suffocating vacuum which only a few protesting outsiders consider oppressive. A young anarchist, Mafizul Haq, describes this vacuum as 'teebro abhavbodh' or 'intense deprivation'. How can one overcome it, at least at the mental level? Evidently, with the books of Elias says the anarchist, for "Elias provokes us to dream in a world where dreams have died, Elias sets the paradigm of creativity in a world where creativity is otherwise pulp, Elias writes a classic in a world where others write ad copies." While the student activists and anarchists, on the one hand, still cling to Elias, the writer and his texts, in their own purificatory fervour, the mainstream's assimilation of the writer also continues unabated, on the other. What links the two sets of contradictory responses is the unquestioned perpetuity of the texts.

Elias himself nurtured a special fascination for Manik Bandyopadhyay and Syed Waliullah. Like *Padma Nadir Majhi* and *Putulnacher Itikatha*

of the former and *Lal Salu* and *Chander Amabasya* of the latter, Elias' *Chilekothar Sepai* and *Khowabnama* will also be read in the future as perpetual texts. Possibly, his poetry too will stand the test of time if they are retrieved and published in a single volume. He wrote one of the best elegies of his time (December-er Bela) and critics like Abu Kaiser and Farhad Mazhar have claimed that he was essentially a poet, as the lyric-chain in *Khowabnama* reveals. Along with others, the diffident and withdrawn Akhtaruzzaman Elias was also convinced of the imperishable value of his work. Predicting the readers' response that awaited his texts, he confided to his wife, "Please remember, what I am saying. My writings will not die. I am convinced of their permanence. You will live to experience the honour that will be conferred on me after my death."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

This article is based on an analysis of comments made by readers of Akhtaruzzaman Elias in Bangladesh. I spoke to them in the second half of December, 1997. The following readers were kind enough to discuss several aspects of Elias' creativity and the subject of readers' response, in particular.

1. Mabinur Rahman : Student-activist, member of the leftist organisation Biplabi Chhatra Maitri.
2. Arshad Siddique : Student-activist, member of the organisation Jatiya Gana Front.
3. Aditi Falguni : Student, closely associated with (1) and (2).
4. Shamim Ara : Editor of the magazine *Addarup* published from Chittagong.
5. Abu Rushd : Student of Akhtaruzzaman Elias.
6. Motia Chaudhury : Minister of Food and Agriculture in Awami League Government.
7. Anu Mohammed : Professor of Economics, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, and member of Lekhak Shibir.
8. Suraiya Elais : Wife of Akhtaruzzaman Elais.
9. Mijanur Rahman Khan : young journalist and writer of a book on fatwas.
10. Masuda Banu Farooq : NGO activist.
11. Shahjahan Farooq : Director, Bangladesh Betar.

12. Haroon Habib : Journalist and writer.
13. Tanvir Iqbal Farooq : Student of engineering.
14. Mohammad Zahid Hussain : Student of journalism.
15. Sonia Sultana Ashraf : Student of political science.
16. Ahmed Rafique : Renowned essayist and poet.
17. Sirajul Islam Chaudhury : Professor of English at Dhaka University and renowned essayist.
18. Kazi ABM Iqbal : Academician and member of Lekhak Shibir.
19. Hassan Azizul Haq : Professor of Philosophy at Rajshahi University and short story writer of distinction.
20. Mafizul Haq : Writer of the book *Santraser Byakaran*.

* Lekhak Shibir is the name of the literary organisation to which Akhtaruzzaman Elias belonged. Badruddin Umar, Anu Mohammed and Kazi ABM Iqbal are members of this organisation. Comments of Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Kayes Mahmud, Badruddin Umar, Farhad Mazhar and Abu Kaiser are to be read in the following newspapers :

1. Sheikh Hasina : *Ajker Kagj*, January 5.
2. Kayes Mahmud : *Dainik Sangram*, January 10.
3. Badruddin Umar : *Dainik Sangbad*, January 5.
4. Farhad Mazhar : Article on Akhtaruzzaman Elias in *Bhorer Kagj*, January 8.

Poem on Akhtaruzzaman Elias in the literary supplement of *Banglabazar Patrika*, January 8.

5. Abu Kaiser : *Dainik Sangbad*, January 5.

After my death publishers will come to you seeking manuscripts and you will also receive royalties against the sale of my books.

Akhtaruzzaman Elias to his wife Suraiya Elias

Publishers' Comments

Publishers of Akhtaruzzaman Elias' books in Bangladesh and West Bengal said in one voice :

(i) It would be incorrect to regard him as a writer's writer. His books have crossed the limits of elite readership and are read by the common people. But that does not mean that he is or ever will be as popular as, say, Humayun Ahmed.

(ii) Elias has earned enviable eminence as a dedicated writer and publishing his books is an act of prestige.

(iii) At one level Elias, the man and writer, is surrounded by an aura and at another his texts are already regarded as classics.

(iv) Repeated reprints of his books, even short stories which usually do not sell briskly, attest to the fact that he is not a losing proposition.

According to *Ahmed Mahmudul Haq of Mowla Brothers (Dhaka)*, publisher of 'Khowabnama' and a selection of short stories entitled 'Jal Swano, Swapner Jal' : "He became widely known after the publication of 'Chilekothar Sepai.' Thereafter, I stuck to him for three years to earn the right to publish his second novel 'Khowabnama'. In fact, I announced the date of publication without informing Elais to pressure him into completing the text. The first edition came out in 1996 and in the course of just two years there have been five reprints. 'Khowabnama', therefore, is a commercial and creative success. We are keen to bring out his complete works in three volumes. We shall request either Prof. Anisuzzaman or Hassan Azizul Haq to be the editor."

According to *Mohiuddin Ahmed of University Press Limited, Dhaka*, Publisher of 'Chilekothar Sepai' and two selections of short stories—'Khoari', 'Anya Ghare Anya Swar' : "We are keen to publish writers who break new grounds and of course Elias is one such author. I followed the serialization of 'Chilekothar Sepai' in *Bichitra* (a magazine), found it to be pathbreaking and decided to publish it. At the Dhaka Book Fair, young people bought this novel eagerly. Leftists were also buyers but I would not limit his readership to one political segment only. Anyone interested in good literature will read Elias. I never regret the fact that I published him. In fact, I hoped that I would be able to publish all his works. *Chilekothar Sepai* was first published in 1986. It took seven years to percolate, the first reprint was out in 1993. Thereafter, there has been a steady gallop—two more reprints in two years. 'Anya Gare Anya Swar' was published in 1976, it has seen two reprints till now. 'Khoari' was published in 1982 and it has also run into two reprints. Business aside, I miss Elais terribly. Can anyone really fill his place? He would have been a major writer in any society and any country."

According to *Bijesh Saha of Prativas*, publisher of 'Chilekothar Sepai' in Calcutta : "Sibnarayan Roy raised the query first in Calcutta—is there not a single publisher here who is prepared to publish this masterpiece? I responded. After securing Elais' permission I published the Calcutta edition in 1991. Initial sale was sluggish but a crucial review of the book written by Abul Bashar and published in *Desh* turned the tide in our favour. Since then, that is August '94, the novel has enjoyed a steady sale and the second edition was published in 1997. As in Bangladesh, Elias is revered by the young generation in West Bengal and it has hailed the novel as a classic. It is to be found in every district library of the state and is also included in the syllabus of Comparative Literature in Jadavpur University."

According to *Parthashankar Basu of Naya Udyog*, publisher of 'Khowabnama' and 'Sanskritir Bhaga Setu' (a collection of essays) in Calcutta : "I knew that this great writer would sell here since 1986. I imported his 'Chilekothar Sepai' from Bangladesh in the eighties and found that there was a good reaction. Why? Because he was so powerful and original and because he already had a dedicated following here. In 1996 April we published 'Khowabnama' and then Elias received the Ananda Purashkar. This gave a tremendous boost and I am happy to state that the first print run of 2000 is exhausted. The second edition was offered in Calcutta Book Fair, 1998. I would love to publish his collection of short stories."

Dr. Dennis Walker

EGYPT'S ARABISM : MUSTAFA KAMIL'S 1893 PLAY ON THE MUSLIM CONQUEST OF SPAIN

Britain's conquest of Egypt in 1882 ushered in a period that in many ways did not favor the development of the standardized, neo-classical cultural elements already directing Egyptians towards a pan-Arab national identity. British policies promoted French and, increasingly, English at the expense of standard Arabic in modern education and government¹. The 1893 play *Fath al-Andalus* (The Conquest of Spain) by Mustafa Kamil (1874-1908) instances, however, the solidity with which real high literary elements from the classical Arabs, reinforced by the historical phobias of Westerners about them, together highlighted a supra-Egyptian pan-Arab past to a new generation of colonized Egyptian youth. Although Kamil earned his reputation as a pioneer of "patriotic" Egyptian particularist nationalism², his play on Muslim Spain illustrated his movement's, and Egypt's, role in pioneering Islamic pan-Arab nationality for the whole Arab World.

Fath al-Andalus' sharp awareness of the classical Arab's feats and literary sensibility was focussed by the political needs of colonized modern Egypt.

Muslim Spain and the Modern Arabs

The conquest of Spain by the Arabs and the period of their rule there has had a central place in all more secular varieties of Arab nationalism. It has provided many enriching as well as energizing images of might, vulnerability and creativity to the independence movements of the Arab peoples. Moorish Spain offered patterns of past relatedness to Europeans—but also of the lethal transferrist turns international relations with Westerners could take—that greatly stimulated the development of pre-1952 Egyptian liberal nationalism into an Egypt-centered pan-Arabism³.

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Among all the intellectual and factional-political forces that have shaped supra-Egyptian anti-imperialist political identifications in Egypt, only fundamentalists of the Ikhwan (Muslim Brotherhood) type have been remiss in exploring the period of Arab rule in Spain. The fear that the Zionists might dispossess and expel the Palestinians as the Christian Spaniards had the Arab Muslims there (along with Zionism's perceived threat to Egypt's potential to economically lead the Arabs) helped draw Egyptians into the Palestine conflict in the 1930s and 1940s⁴.

The political and military presence of Western powers in the Arab world remains as salient today as in Mustafa Kamil's era and pan-Arab treatments of the Conquest of Spain continue to draw solace from the military might against Westerners that it patterns. Among recent responses to the conquest, though, intellectualism promoted from al-Qadhdhafi's Libya, has lately opened into surprisingly thoughtful and non-triumphalist consideration of the nature of classical Arab institutions. Among such Qudhdhafiite re-evaluation, Ahmad 'Abd Al-Rahman (1992) assessed the conquest in relation to the nature of the Umayyad Empire as a whole. When Tariq Ibn Ziyad crossed the strait of Gibraltar at the command of the Arab governor of North Africa in 711, al-Walid Ibn 'Abd al-Malik was ruling as Caliph from far-away Damascus. From its outset, 'Abd al-Rahman reflected, "Islamic life in al-Andalus" accordingly had all the elements of both the strength and the weaknesses of the Umayyad elite : their brave fighting spirit and porous interest in literature, knowledge and civilization but also the hereditary, non-democratic, monarchical political system that predictably arose out of those conquests, as against Islam's democratic consultation (*shura*). The Umayyad state had been debilitated by Khariji and Shi'ite insurrections at the time of the conquest, which therefore was not due to greater Arab governmental cohesion vis-a-vis Visigothic Christian weakness in Spain. Classical Arab historians had described the Caliph al-Walid as tyrannical and rapacious and hence mistrustful of his commanders and governors, such as Musa Ibn Nusayr who conquered Spain. The Umayyad central government hampered and later degraded Musa : the Conquest was thus due to the Arabs' Islamic religious motivation, wish for martyrdom and ethnic qualities, not to more coherent governmental institutions than Europe had⁵.

In contrast, Mustafa Kamil's 1893 play was still innocent of the modernized, critical perspective of Arab radicals in the 1980s and 1990s. It did, though, already stress the factional and ethnic divisions on the eve of the Conquest among the Christians of Spain, some of whom invited the Arabs in. Kamil and subsequent Egyptian and Arab writers all have been encouraged to perceive disunity and moral decay in pre-Muslim Spain by classical Arab sources that perhaps incorporated from the folklore of Spanish Christian subjects mythic fables of the moral baseness of Roderick (in Arabic *Ludhriq*), the last Visigothic King of Spain⁶.

Mustafa Kamil's 1893 Play *Fath al-Andalus*

We now undertake detailed analysis of Kamil's Arab-centric five-act play (*The Conquest of Spain*) which he wrote in formative late adolescence in July and August 1893 (Muharram and Safar 1311⁷). A vivid, clear, rather pro-Muslim overview of the Arabs' conquest and rule of Spain accessible to Kamil was in L. A. Sédillot's *Histoire des Arabes*⁸. Kamil's mentor, the Arab-orientated Egyptian educationalist 'Ali Mubarak (1823-93) had brought out an Arabic translation of Sédillot's work in late 1892, a few months before Kamil wrote his play; the Arab-orientated Egyptian anti-imperialist 'Abdallah al-Nadim, a strong influence upon the young Kamil at the time, in 1892 published in his magazine *al-Ustadh* a joint article with 'Ali Mubarak to promote the translation's sales⁹. The *al-Ustadh* article stressed that Sédillot's work offered a digest of information from unpublished manuscripts of works by classical Arab historians inaccessible to ordinary Egyptians—urgently needed, because malicious studies of the classical Arabs in European languages “harmed our [acculturated] youth in its religious and temporal life”¹⁰. *Al-Ustadh* had encouraged Kamil and other Muslim Egyptian teenagers at Europe-modelled secular secondary schools to produce plays, often set in classical Arab West Asia, that would energize resistance to the British in Egypt. For his 1893 play on Spain, Kamil had perhaps also taken the trouble to read the few classical Arab histories that had been published at that early date. The play's passages of poetical dialogue

accurately re-created the conventions of Andalusian love-poetry¹¹. If Kamil accurately presented at least facets of the actual historical Arab conquest of Spain (710-11) he selectively focussed on those inspirational feats of the classical Arabs that would usefully pattern single-minded indigenous might and resistance. Whether from youthful naivety or utilitarian calculation, he ignored personal or ethnic tensions between Muslim individuals : the classical Arab sources were proto-modern in comparison, in recording the clashes and jealousies between the Arab governor and his conquering Berber lieutenant or between the governor Ibn Nusayr and the far-away Damascus Caliph¹².

Prominent themes about the classical Arabs in Kamil's play intermeshed with his acculturated Muslim Egyptian group's perceptions of current history, the age of imperialism in international relations.

1. The world-conquering classical Arabs demonstrated Muslim capacity to achieve international military strength against Westerners.

2. The classical Arab Muslims and the West were two warring camps that continue as the crucial entities in modern international relations.

3. Islam motivated the conquests and the day-to-day community of the classical Arabs.

The plot. The play opens in qayruwan, the Arabs' capital in North Africa, with the Governor Musa Ibn Nusayr undecided whether to invade Spain. Julian, the exarch of Septem (Ceuta) has complained against the Visigothic king of Spain, Roderick, and invited the Arabs to invade the country. Two Byzantines, Nasim and Maryam, have come all the way from their country to North Africa to persuade Musa's Chief Minister 'Abbad, who grew up among the Arabs but was of Byzantine origin, to stop the Arabs invading Spain. Out of loyalty to the Byzantine homeland of his forbears and in order to win the love of Maryam, 'Abbad does try to dissuade Musa. However, Musa dispatches an assault force to Spain commanded by his lieutenant Tariq Ibn Ziyad. 'Abbad, Nasim and Maryam forge a letter supposedly from Mahmud, one of Tariq's commanders, that Tariq has died ; when Musa receives the fake letter, 'Abbad presses him to recall the assault force. When a letter comes from Tariq that his army is triumphing in Spain, Musa imprisons 'Abbad, then departs to Spain at the head of more Arab forces. In Spain, the

victorious Musa and Tariq, heading their two Muslim armies, link up at Toledo. Tariq tells Musa that an Arab, 'Arif, who had been spying upon Nasim, Maryam and 'Abbad, had written a report to him of 'Abbad's treachery. The three Byzantines have been brought to Toledo and Musa condemns them to be exiled.

World-Conquering Arabs; Wide Warring Blocs

For Kamil and his acculturated Egyptian strata, humiliated by European colonial rule, the classical Arabs encouragingly demonstrated the capacity of Muslims to beat back and even conquer Europeans. He made the Byzantine woman Maryam characterize the Arabs as

a people...whose directing lamp is love conquest. If they conquer a land they do not stop there but go beyond it to another although that entail the most severe difficulties and the greatest hardships.

...This proud towering nation (*ummah*) which terrified all humanity does not fear Spain or any other country. That is a nation like iron that only iron can cut...where can [we Byzantines find] people of iron who can resist the men of this great people? ¹³

The colonized Kamil no doubt greatly relished the state of terror to which the world-conquering classical Arabs had reduced the imperial Christian Byzantines, who had obvious affinity to the imperial Christian British ruling his Egypt. The Kamilists' attraction to the classical Arabs' military expansion and violence, to their terrorization of by-gone Westerners was an emotional compensating response to the British colonial regime's systematic intimidation of Egyptians, not of an aggressive drive in current international relations. In other works than *Fath al-Andalus*, Kamil exalted with equal fervour more constructive scientific intellectual endeavors of the classical Arabs in the empire they built ¹⁴. The classical Arabs for him were a positive intellectual civilization of enduring worth, not just violent military prowess.

Fath al-Andalus' plot strongly reiterated al-Nadim's theme that Christian Europe / the West and the Muslims / the East have throughout history been two mortally warring camps. The Christian Europeans would attack and destroy the (Arab) Muslims the moment Islam's

offensive impetus slackened. In relation to the aggressive intentions of the Europeans, Musa Ibn Nusayr thus saw himself as forced to strike into Spain, preemptively, because the rulers there “have designs upon our land”¹⁵. Kamil’s own growth to maturity in an intimidated Egypt not so long subjected to British colonial rule was impressing upon him how aggressive Europeans could be against Muslims. His 1893 play on Spain, though, exaggerated the age-old unity with which Westerners from geographically very far-separated states resisted and undermined Muslim power : unity inspired by emotional affinity as well as Europe’s joint interests. Kamil made the prospect of Arabs / Muslims conquering even very distant Westerners in Spain, seem so abhorrent to its Byzantine characters and such a threat to the far-removed Byzantine Empire itself, that Maryam and Nasim journeyed all the way to Arab North Africa to stop the Arab invasion. They succeeded in activating the same fears that even distant Arab expansion threatened Byzantium in the Byzantine-descended ‘Abbad, who had grown up among the Arabs : and persuaded him to misuse his position to halt the invasion. The Byzantines’ perception was not just that the sovereignties of the component parts of the West, however far-flung, were so interlinked as to necessitate support for even very distant Westerners in conflict with Muslims.¹⁶ Kamil evoked in his play that the Arabs would readily make Spain their springboard to conquer European lands in general. Musa left Qayruwan to join Tariq when news came of his successes in Spain “so that we can achieve conquest in Spain and in other lands of the Ifranj (Europeans)”¹⁷ Such counter-might in universal history was therapeutic for Kamil’s colonized generation. But his theme that the Arabs hoped to conquer other European lands from Spain, perhaps ultimately including even Constantinople, also followed such classical writers as Ibn Khaldun—who were to influence such later pan-Arabizing Egyptian historians as Muhammad ‘Abdallah ‘Inan from the late 1920’s to see such wider possibilities in the seizure of Spain¹⁸ as the British and the rising Zionist entity in Palestine increasingly threatened Egypt’s tenuous independence. Kamil’s play evoked two wide but coherent religious entities at war throughout history. Although separated in geographically scattered states, all Westerners would come to the aid of any Western State at war with Muslims even if not themselves threatened. “Suppose”, Nasim the

Byzantine replies to 'Abbad, who argued that he need not sabotage the Arabs' conquest of Spain because it is no threat to his forefathers' land, Byzantium, "suppose that our land is unlikely to be harmed : have you forgotten the national and religious bonds and links which the population of Spain have with us [Byzantines]?"¹⁹.

Kamil's classical Arabs could predispose him and other acculturated Muslim Egyptians in later life to perceive modern international relations as likewise shaped by recurring conflict between two hostile camps or worlds : the Muslim camp and the Christian-European-Western bloc. Yet, in his play, the Arabs had decidedly set up, and directed, a quasi-national Islamic state, admittedly one both decentralized and encompassing all the world's Muslims of that age. The intimate community wider than Egypt that the play might suggest for modern history could turn out to be a pan-Arab nation rather than a pan-Muslim bloc.

Past Delays Homelands Nationalisms

Kamil in 1893 wanted the classical Arabs to transform some thought-patterns and behavior of modern Muslims but not yet in toto or systematically at the time that he penned his play. When he was thinking of classical Islam, Kamil throughout his life perceived the wide "Arab nation" (*al-Ummat al-'Arabiyyah*) comprised of all Arabic-speakers : he voiced little awareness of a homeland-framed separate Egyptian community for that era. But he and his followers were slow to see modern Arabic-speakers as all one contemporary successor Arab linguistic nation. At the end of his play, Kamil had the victorious Ibn Nusayr remind the Muslims of the virtues distinguishing the Islamic "nations" from other nations.²⁰ This deliberate anachronism points to the crystallization of separate nationalities and states in post-classical Islam, which for Kamilists did not affect the overriding unity of the Muslim camp in its conflicts with the Christian-Western bloc, or indeed the prescriptiveness of the classical Arabs' culture and traits for subsequent Muslim nations.

Classical Arabs' Fluid Territoriality. Kamil's gleeful exalting of the classical Arabs' world conquests ran contrary to consolidation of the idea of territory-determined nations in the loyalties of Egyptians.

Rigorous territorial national thought in Egypt after the 1922 quasi-independence analysed the classical Arabs' empire as supraterritorial and multi-national and therefore unnatural and temporary : territorial homelands such as Egypt frame the historically permanent national communities and national states. Kamil, in contrast, regarded the Arabs' homelands-spanning supraterritorial state as history's highpoint, not an aberration.

Kamil's play validated the Arab Nation's title to all the conquered lands in which it consolidated its state. It mainly characterized the Arabs as motivated to conquer by Islam but also by commitment to a shifting, expanding (Arab) territorial entity : usually this is grammatically plural : lands (*bilad*) or *awtanina* "our homelands". The territorial entity "the Arab land(s)" was all the lands that the Arabs brought under their State's long-term administration, not some smaller, fixed Arab homeland of origin (peninsular Arabia). On first meeting Nasim, 'Abbad asks him "what is your impression of the Arab land(s) (*al-bilad al-'Arabiyyah*)?"²¹ —that is to say, Qayruwan and North Africa, the native Berbers of which Kamil knew the Arabs were still assimilating. Musa, ready to depart to Spain, considers that to be killed there would be a noble martyrdom "in foreign parts (*fil-ightirab*)" in contrast to death "in a person's [own] land among his people and relatives".²² Spain, though, would be categorized among the Arab lands once it became a consolidated Arab province with an Arabic-speaking community.

For territorial nationalists the stable geographical homelands define the boundaries of the legitimate states. For the youthful Kamil in regard to the classical Arabs the progressively expanding boundaries of their effective rule fix the fluid but valid Arab territorial entity. When he proudly identified with the constantly expanding classical Arabs, Kamil lacked consciousness of Egypt as separate land or community that the Arabs only temporarily subjected.

Incorporative Classical Arab Ethnos

Kamil's play closely followed al-Nadim's expansionist, racially as well as territorially incorporative, (historical) Arabism. The classical Arab nation was a fluid, expanding community that not only constantly

conquered but Arabized and assimilated new originally non-Arab populations. This Arab-centric Muslim Egyptian world view welcomed into the Muslim Arab nation all, regardless of their original races, who believed in Islam and were prepared to sacrifice their previous cultures and behavioral traits in order to adopt Arab identity completely.

The simultaneous racial assimilativeness and cultural intolerance of acculturated Egyptian Arab ideology was illustrated in Kamil's contrasting treatment of two Berber characters. On one hand Kamil's play exalted Tariq Ibn Ziyad, Musa Ibn Nusayr's lieutenant who got the conquest of Spain well and truly under way, as the embodier of Islamic and Arab qualities. Kamil clearly had read Arab and/or European works for his material before he wrote the play : he knew that Tariq was Musa's Berber freedman but the play did not mention Tariq's origins because race was irrelevant to its criteria of Arabness.²³ Islam and Arabness were two motives that went together in the Muslims' classical history as Kamil visualized it. Musa Ibn Nusayr told "the intrepid hero" Tariq that he had appointed him commander of the expedition "in view of our confidence in your Arab zeal and your Islamic ardour and your military skill",²⁴ and Tariq declares that Islam and Arab zeal together will indeed motivate him "to raise up my religion in those lands".²⁵ Here, Arabness was something acquirable that can be adopted and internalized like, and in close conjunction with, Islam : even without Arab race individuals could belong to the (classical) Arab nation by identification and participating in its enterprises.

Kamil's contrasting negative treatment of another Berber character shows how total was the cultural and behavioral assimilation to Arabness he expected of non-Arab Muslims. The Berber converts who made up the bulk of Musa and Tariq's armies would be a dangerous weak point in the Arabo-Muslim nation untill they totally absorbed Arab qualities as well as Islam. The traitorous Christian-born Chief Minister 'Abbad and the Byzantines Nasim and Maryam plan to forge a letter from the Commander Mahmud to Musa Ibn Nusayr that Tariq has died, in the hope that Musa will call back the expedition to Spain :

Maryam. That soldier should be [chosen] from among the Berbers who only recently joined Islam because I think that none among the Arabs would dare to betray his land(s) (country *biladihi*) to this degree.

'Abbad. You're right, not among the Arabs would dare to carry this plot through because they have won renown among all the nations for their intentness to maintain the interests of their land(s) (*biladihim*) and their great devotion to their homelands (*awtanihim*). Moreover, the Arabs are people of sharp intelligence and sagacity. If we entrust this task to one of them he undoubtedly shall understand from the first instant that we shall kill him after he carries out his assignment, in contrast to others of whom one can easily make use for these matters. ³⁶

Thus, Kamil very much viewed classical Islam's great past through an Arab national consciousness. The first model Islamic community was not a nationally neutral ideological enterprise that in overarching would maintain a diversity of peoples as its units. The young Kamil lacked any pluralist vision that non-Arabs entering the classical Muslim *Ummiah* brought in positive traits and cultures as contributions for the whole Muslim community comparable to the model qualities imposed by the Arabs. The play characterizes Islam's classical greatness in terms of the Arabs' elimination of other national traditions rather than synthesis.

Fath al-Andalus' awareness of the specificities of the Arabs and other national groups in the first model classical Muslim community might make modern Egyptians somewhat more likely to perceive the contemporary Muslims too as divided into different ethnic nations. The play, however, would not make Egyptians think more in terms of racial or territorial nations and thus of a territory-framed Egyptian nation continuous from pagan antiquity and independent of Islam.

The play's satisfaction that the classical Arabs obliterated the identities and traits of other nations that adopted Islam (e.g. the Berbers), taken with Kamil's sense that Islam and Arabness should expand and develop together, could be extended to pose questions about nineteenth and twentieth century communities. Had the classical Arabs incorporated the Egyptians into a new Arab community wider than the land of Egypt in an enduring sense? Was the Arab Nation really something bygone as well as magnificent and prescriptive, or did modern Egyptians have special relations with Arabs or populations the classical Arabs once Arabized beyond Egypt's borders? Kamil had depicted non-Arabized Muslims as stupid and ethically inferior in comparison to Arabs in Islam's

model classical community. But he and his colleagues in the Egyptian independence movement put off ethnically differentiating current Middle Eastern Muslims, which might question the Ottoman Turks' title to rule Arabs in their multi-national Empire. It would help Egypt regain independence if the Ottoman State, Turks and Arabs together, built a modern strength with which to block further British expansion from Egypt. In 1893, Kamil hailed the Sultan 'Abdul-Hamid's construction of numerous Europe-modelled schools as restoring to "the Easterners" that "universalization of education" (*ta'nim al-ta'lim*) with which the classical Arabs achieved greatness : the European standards that the Empire's schools were now attaining offered "a bright future for us Ottomans."²⁷ Ethnic dissidence by Ottoman Arabs might help Britain expand. It was much later that the Kamilists stopped seeing the Turks as equal heirs to the classical Arabs' literate creativity with the Ottoman Arabs, and switched over to solidarity with the latter.

Islam-Motivated Arabs

Unmindful that it might alienate Copts and other Arab Christians not just from the classical Arabs but from Muslim Egyptian compatriots like himself, Kamil in the play celebrated Islam as the motive of the Arabs' world conquests and community. To motivate the departing Tariq to conquer Spain effectiely, Musa Ibn Nusayr repeats to him the saying (*hadith*) of the Prophet Muhammad "the eastern and western reaches of the earth have been combined for me and the kingdom of my *ummah* shall encompass these lands combined for me" (*Zuwiwat li mashariq al-ard wa magharibuha wa sayablughu mulku ummati ma zuwiya li minha*)²⁸. So long as Christian Westerners resist coming under the Arab Muslim's rule, Islam would motivate the Arabs to fight them with ferocious violence : "you have chosen for the expedition required to conquer Spain", Tariq assures Musa, "a man with no aim but to aid Islam and raise the word of Belief to supremacy although it necessitate that rivers of blood flow and veritable seas of gore from skulls". (Musa, however, instructed Tariq that Islam obligated him to treat Spain's non-Muslims kindly as soon as they surrender to the rule of the Muslims²⁹—

the Muslims' alternate gentle face to vanquished non-Muslims). As Musa prepares to go to Spain to join in the conquests that Tariq has started there, he appoints his son 'Abdallah as acting governor of Ifriqiyyah (North Africa) in his absence. "The leading figures among the believers" (*akabir al-Mu'minina*) had proposed 'Abdallah to act as governor. "Be careful not to act in contravention of the Book [Quran] and the *Sunnah* (practice) of the Prophet", Musa instructs his son³⁰. The sense, thus, was strong in Kamil's play that the temporal ideology Islam directed how classical Arab rulers governed their empire, internally, and motivated their external conquests of non-Muslims. Classical historians under the 'Abbasids who had overthrown the Umayyads, smeared them as impious anti-Islamic usurpers. Instead, *Fath al-Andalus*—and perhaps with some historical basis despite all its (instrumental?) exaggerations... considered the Umayyad dynasty authentic. Islam-motivated custodians of the God-prescribed Islamic international state, founded by the Prophet³¹. Tariq when setting out to Spain hopes that he will achieve victories that will cause "the Commander of Faithful and every individual of the Islamic nation [*al-ummat al-Isma'iliyyah*] to rejoice. God guide us to courses that benefit our lands, bring happiness to our homelands and [grant] power/pride to our religion, verily He is All-hearing and answers prayers"³². Kamil's Arab heroes express the sense that a personal God intervened to sustain their conquest of Spain. The triumphant Tariq describes his conquests as "nothing but the duty that every true Muslim has to do"³³; "I had no real aider in these conquests other than Allah, exalted be He...He aids only the truth/right and its people."³⁴

The "superficial religiosity"³⁵ that pervaded Kamil's youthful *Fath al-Andalus* recurred throughout his political career, and in the oratory and journalism of his movement of Egyptian national independence. This style surely indicates markedly sectional assimilation in Kamil's acculturated circle of a true Islam as concerned that believers conquer their individual proclivities as that they should conquer territory as a collectivity³⁶. Kamil so identified Islam as the classical Arabs' principle of political community and the motive of their world conquests that no Coptic or Syrian Christian in his audience could feel affinity with them. Subsequent to *Fath al-Andalus*, Kamil stressed the land of Egypt and that it framed a distinct Egyptian political community comprised of

Christian as well as Muslim members. He developed such Egyptian particularist theses specifically to integrate Coptic and Muslim Egyptians in one united movement for independence from British colonial rule. But his and his Muslim followers' enthusiastic conceptualization of past and present supra-Egyptian entities as inherently Islamic was to persist, turning off the Copts.

Classical Arabs Exclude Some Current Arab Christians

To make this play about the classical Arabs' bygone conquest of Spain register the untrustworthiness of present-day non-European Christians who had come to British-occupied Egypt, Kamil applied to 'Abbad, Muryam and Nasim the very term *dukhala*' (interlopers, intruders, aliens) which he commonly directed at pro-British Syrian Christians. Kamil was also furious that Nubar Pasha Nubarian (1825-99), an Armenian who served as Foreign Minister and Prime Minister of Egypt, renounced Egypt's title to the Sudan : Nubar did such services so that the British would carve an independent Armenia from Turkey in repayment, Kamil believed³⁷. The mounting conflict between the modern Arabo-Muslim elite and the Armenian and Syrian Christians who were helping Britain consolidate her shaky control in Egypt, found expression in Kamil's 1897 play on Spain. In the curtain-speech to the assembled victorious Muslims, summing up the significance of events, Musa Ibn Nusayr was made to say that "the interlopers (*al-dukhala*') such as ['Abbad] are the enemies who do most harm to the nations (*al-umam*) among which they enter"³⁸. The inability of the *dukhala*' to meet the religious requirement of membership inherently made the *dukhala*' want to destroy the classical, and the modern Egyptian, Arab political sovereignty. Kamil put into the mouth of 'Arif, who had had the Byzantine conspirators under surveillance, the denunciation that the interlopers (*al-dukhala*') in the land harm more than the strongest enemies...The Minister 'Abbad is not Arab in origin but an intruder (*dakhil*) among the Muslims who was brought up among them not to serve them sincerely but to work intrigues on behalf of his people when the need arise. However high the position to which he rise in Islam...the Byzantine blood running in his veins summons him

constantly to betray the Muslims and to try to destroy the foundations of their kingdom ³⁹.

Perhaps more than Christianity, this passage identified original non-Arab race ("blood") as motivating 'Abbad's plot against the Arabs' Islamic state; and Maryam early in the play appealed to his *wataniyyah* (patriotism) as well as "blood"-relationship with his racial relatives in Constantinople—she appeals to him not to become "a traitor to your land" ⁴⁰. 'Abbad identified himself as non-Muslim when he acquiesced to Nasim's argument that "religious" as well as "national" bonds bound "us" (the Byzantines) to "the population of Spain" ⁴¹; Kamil made the character 'Arif voice apparent religious hatred of 'Abbad as an enemy non-Muslim when as "a service to Islam" he wants "to cast you ['Abbad] into the hell of torment" (*Jahannam al-'adhab*) ⁴². The need not to alienate the Christian Copts probably made Kamil somewhat mute the theme that Christianity (as well as outside territorial origin and difference of race) made 'Abbad (and Syrian and Armenian Christians in British-occupied Egypt) disloyal and treacherous towards the host Arabo-Muslim community. Al-nadim had been intent in his magazine *al-Ustadh* published from August 1892 to June 1893, to describe the Copts as an inherent component of a multi-sectarian Egyptian political community—lest the occupying British detach them from the independence movement. Al-Nadim was the ideological master of the young Kamil, who started writing *Fath-al-Andalus* in July 1893, the month following British proconsul Cromer's closure of al-Nadim's journal.

To sum up, the modern ethnic collectivity that Kamil's play could help suggest to Egyptians would be a pan-Arabism for Muslims: over the longer term it was to foster the sense of an ongoing community of Arab or Arabicized Muslims within the multinational Muslim belief community. It would nourish the conviction that Arab or Arabicized Muslims were the Muslims *par excellence* who should lead the other Muslims. While Kamil lived, his movement cogently depicted the Ottoman Turks (with their West Asian Arabs) as fulfilling with educational and other modernization the literate creativity of the classical Arabs. It was only under Kamil's successor Muhammad Farid, that the Kamilists applied their ethnicizing classical Arab motifs in sympathy for separatist Ottoman Arabs, straining the movement's relations with the

Turks who headed the international pan-Islamic movement. However, Kamil's recurringly Islamist definition of the classical Arabs he idealized did not offer much of a prototype for any modern Arab successor-community constituted solely upon secular ethnic elements that would offer Christian Arabs the same membership as Arabic-speaking Muslims. The Islamic coloring of Kamil's great pan-Arab past and of his solidarity with the Ottoman Turks was liable to lead Arab Christians, Coptic as well as immigrant Syrian, to conclude that Kamil's group were constructing a *Muslim* political independence movement in Egypt and shun it.⁴³

Kamil's play would make *Muslim* Egyptians trust at least some culturally similar, non-European Christians less. The figure of 'Abbad made the point that life-long residence in the Arab Muslim community, consequent Arabic speech and cultural Arabness, in themselves cannot confer the right to hold high office in it without Islam. *Fath al-Andalus* in effect warned that the modern Muslims, in Egypt or elsewhere, should not apply the classical Arabs' tolerance in public appointments because it had allowed dangerous anti-Islamic traitors to work their way up to high positions⁴⁴. The play's hardening of attitudes towards categories of non-European Christians was partly provoked: immigrant Syrian Christians educated at the American University in Bayrut had played key roles in the British intelligence apparatus in Egypt⁴⁵, and as editors of the British-financed Cairo daily *al-Muqattam* that so untiringly defended the Occupation.

Although politically embittered by collaboration for a time, the intellectual and cultural relationship that the Kamilist independence movement had with the Christian Syrians was much more varied and indeed intimate than the Western scholarly literature has been prepared to allow. Kamil's 1893 play imaged human virtues that the Arabs had originated and cultivated of themselves, however symbiotically with Islam; and Christian Syrians in Egypt, in the homeland and in the West had evolved their own poetry and theatre pivoting around the neutral pre-Islamic Arabia in particular as the basis of the secular Arab national identity common to Christian and Muslim Arabs. In certain contexts, Kamil and similar Muslim Egyptians really were prepared to separate from Islam the Arab virtues that they exalted simultaneously with the SC's -making Arabness a sects-integrative identity with which to face

the West. Thus, Kamil encouraged his Paris-resident Catholic Syrian friend Shukri Ghanim to pen a French drama on the pre-Islamic Black Arabian warrior 'Antarah Ibn Shaddad, so as to make the Europeans come to respect the Arab virtues. Kamil was at the fore of Egyptian intellectuals who encouraged Ghanim to come to Egypt and arranged a performance of the initial text of the play in the Khedivial Opera House. Not the Kamilists only, but the writers of Ahmed Lutfi al-Sayyid's less pan-Islamic Egyptianist *al-Jaridah* were pleased when Ghanim's 'Antarah was finally acted, with good French reviews, in Paris in 1910. The play provided some of the inspiration of a drama on 'Antarah later to be written by the Egyptian Muslim neo-classicist poet Ahmad Shawqi ⁴⁶.

In collaborating with Ghanim, Kamil was shifting to a more religiously neutral, humanist Arab identity, one very open to non-Muslim Arabs in high culture at least. The connection might also one day open into a more far-reaching separation of Arabness and Islam in which Egyptian pan-Islamists could give political support to multi-sectarian Arab ethnic protest or secessionism in the Ottoman Empire against its Turks. Already in 1906, Kamil—for the sake of a culture bond—at least turned a blind eye to the encouragement that Ghanim had got from the Quai d'Orsay to fan Syrianist national ideas from his Paris exile against the Ottoman central government ⁴⁷. In 1910, somewhat after Kamil's death, and after the Young Turks' coup opened a more unstable and pluralist phase in the Empire's politics, campaigning by Ghanim in such Paris newspapers as *Le Temps* could spark off vituperative conflict between Turkish and Arab politicians and newspapers in Constantinople itself ⁴⁸.

Syrian Christian writers and editors in Egypt crucially stimulated both the Arabist-classicist and modernist-scientificist streams of Muslim Egyptian writers from the late 1870s. The Maronite Ibrahim al-Yaziji (1857-1906) came to Egypt in 1895 from which he brought out the journal *al-Diya'*, a purist watchdog on the styles of all Egyptian and Fertile Crescent writers in Arabic : it helped mould in youth such later pioneers of post-1930 Egyptian pan-Arabism as Ahmad Hasan al-Zayyat. Antun al-Jumayyil (1887-1948) edited the Bayrut Jesuit *al-Bashir* but also penned dramas and poetry on pre-Islamic peninsular Arabians and their prescriptive virtues : as editor of the Cairo *al-Ahram* he promoted

the development of the post-1922 pan-Arabism of such Egyptian friends as al-Zu'ayyat and 'Abd al-Rahman 'Azzam the first Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

Kamil most often identified historical Arabness with Islam. Nonetheless, his occasional acceptance of the pre-Islamic peninsular Arabian origin as positive, and his reiteration of classical motifs of Arab ethnic superiority, opened some possibilities for a secular Arab ethnic nationalism. Acculturation to de-Christianizing secular France may have diluted some sectors of the Islam of his small Muslim-Egyptian elite, yet Islam remained central in his Arab-historical concerns, too—as where he wrote that Islam had been indispensable to uplift “that nomadic [classical Arab] nation” so as to make them the conquerors and educators of the world⁴⁹. Kamil did distinguish some special characteristics and culture of the classical Arabs from Islam, but still made Islam too central in that shared historical configuration for it to integrate many Christian Arabs with his Egyptian stratum.

Diverges From Western Nationalism

Liberal West European Nationalists depicted proper international relations as a comity of stable linguistic or territorial nations. Each nation had title to govern itself, and would atomistically form and switch fluid alliances with other nations in accordance with changing interests.

Kamil's 1893 play was traditional-Islamic in the main : it tended to lump Westerners together as one broad anti-Muslim Christian camp. It imaged international war between the coherent *Dar al-Harb* camp (grouping the West's political states Byzantium, Visigothic Spain etc.) and the Arab-led Dar al-Islam. However, Kamil when writing the play already had been somewhat touched by West European knowledge and concepts such as the right of nations or populations to self-determination. Kamil therefore tried to show that some Christian Europeans in Spain welcomed rather than resisted the conquering Muslim Arabs. This poses the question of how much potentiality the play suggested for new positive relationships between Muslims and Europeans : if the Dar al-Islam vs Dar al-Harb pattern might lapse.

Kamil's play made abundantly clear the divisions between Spain's Christians crucially helped the Arabs to conquer Spain. He had Musa Ibn Nusayr say that the invitation of Julian exarch of Septem (Ceuta), for the Arabs to enter and depose the Visigothic King Roderick was what "most motivated [us] to try to conquer these lands"⁵⁰. The discontent of Roderick's Christian subjects in general at his oppression made them assent to conquest by the non-Christian Arabs. Thus the conquering Tariq

found them overjoyed and delighted when I treated them after the practice of our Prophet : granting them security in their religion, their liberty, in their wealth, their women and their children. Many of them explained to me the many oppressive acts of Roderick—how he used to dishonour their women and daughters in public, without fear of anyone⁵¹.

This theme that the Arabs' Islamic rule offered more justice, and that many of Spain's Christians therefore welcomed it (though ultra-alien), conveniently reconciled two ideological influences on Kamil : (a) modern European nationalisms' theoretical averseness to one nation subjugating another against its will with (b) traditionalist Muslim celebration of Islam's power. He fused Islam's expansionist drive and the interests of the indigenous non-Islamic people being conquered : as "Musa Ibn Nusayr" expressed it, by "raising God's word" to supremacy through conquering Spain "we raised from this weak people the various types of injustice with which the lecherous Roderick weighed down their shoulders"⁵². Kamil's concept of the Gothic ruler Roderick's oppression of the Spanish population shows how traditional his mind remained : he stressed Roderick's violation of his subjects' sexual honour, especially his surely mythical defilement of exarch Julian's daughter⁵³, asserted by the ancient Arab chroniclers as the motive of Julian's appeal for Arab intervention. Kamil in the play nowhere was aware of any *national* antagonism—or the Arian-versus-Catholic religious divide—between the ruling Visigothic caste and the autochthonous Spanish population⁵⁴. His Islamic pride quite blotted from Kamil's mind any awareness of a Spanish nation motivated by patriotism to defend its independence from the Arabs. *Fath al-Andalus* thus was the play of a young Muslim more

attracted to the Islam-sustained ethnic Arab nation constantly expanding through its international conquests than to strict European concepts of *stable, permanent* territorial or racial nations. It is to be noted, though, that Kamil, during his lobbying for support for Egyptian independence in Europe, quickly became sharply aware of the Christian Armenian and Greek nationalisms that were also publicizing themselves there. Although he denied the right of the Armenians to secede from the Ottoman Empire in a letter from Paris in 1895, he voiced interest in the detailed organizational forms and procedures the Armenian and Bulgarian separatists were evolving to win full independence from his fellow Muslims, the Turks. Kamil urged Egyptians to imitate against the British the commitment, "patriotic" fervor and skills with which those two "Eastern races" (sic) were striking at the Turks⁵⁵.

Although meant to justify the Arabs' invasion, Kamil's theme that some Spaniards welcomed conquest by the just Arabs and the rule of Islam would suggest to Egyptians that Muslims and Christians could have good relations. This motif, that most Europeans in Spain were not hostile, might foster the Egyptian audience's hopes of new international relations of friendship with some Europeans (France) against others (the occupying British) across the religious divide. It might influence Muslim Egyptians' attitudes towards resident Europeans or even native Christians (Syrian, Copts, Armenians) in contemporary Egypt/the Ottoman Empire.

The Khedive

The young Khedive 'Abbas (reigned 1892-1914) soon became a focus for Egyptian resistance to British rule. He perhaps financed Kamil's law studies in France out of Palace funds⁵⁶, and certainly bankrolled the lobbying and publicity that Kamil thenceforth conducted throughout Europe in order to incite France and other states to pressure Britain to evacuate the Nile Valley.

Yet, in the 1893 play, Kamil already drew from the figure of Roderick a warning to Egypt's Khedivial ruling house—this must be directed to the newly-crowned 'Abbas—not to be luxury-loving, selfish and tyrannical, so that the Egyptian people would prefer the rule of the

religiously and nationally alien British. Kamil put into Musa Ibn Nusayr's mouth after the conquest the rather general warning that

every kingdom in which the people lose confidence (*do 'ufa ra'y al-sha'b fihi*) and in which power is taken by a man who tramples on people's dignity and honour will be lost as your [newly-won] province Spain slipped from the hand of Roderick whose fornication, debauchery and corruption [caused] the educated and the uneducated, the great and the small among his own compatriots to complain and all surrender to us [Arabs] although we differ from them in religion, customs, and intelligence ⁵⁷.

Kamil in this passage may have obliquely characterized the Khedives' rule prior to the 1882 British conquest as so corrupt and oppressive, that it made the Egyptians unpatriotically welcome British rule.

It is true that in his early French and Arabic writings and speeches Kamil eulogized the Khedivial 'Alid house and to the French flayed 'Urabi Pasha as a fool whom the British manipulated in order to conquer Egypt in 1882 ⁵⁸. Yet he was already almost openly warning and criticizing the Khedive 'Abbas in his 1898 book *al-Mas'alat al-Sharqiyyah* (The Eastern Question) when he denounced the plots of the British to set up an "Arab Caliphate" by which to destroy the Ottoman Sultan's authority and then occupy the Arabian peninsula—legally facilitating final annexation of a still formally "Ottoman" Egypt. 'Abbas was already fanning Arab ethnic dissidence in the Ottoman Empire.

If the tyrant Roderick already stood in 1893 for a potentiality within 'Abbas, the play already had a germ of Mustafa Kamil's and Muhammad Farid's mature liberal stance that patriotism is not automatic from the people. A commitment to a liberal constitution or a safeguarding parliamentarism are needed to motivate the people to stand with a national movement or government.

Kamil's youthful play on the Arab entry of Spain no doubt does not fit easily with the more demanding Egypt-centric "patriotic" motifs that he and others in his movement went on to articulate. Simultaneously, though, he and his colleagues also continued to develop the Araboid attitudes of his adolescent drama. For Kamil, to his death, Arabness was a proud identity (albeit not his only one) with which to face Europe.

In an 1898 study that he first published in an Italian agricultural magazine, he wrote that "Arab generosity" was still intact in the Egyptian peasants who keep their doors open to guests regardless of religion or race. Before the Islamic conquest, Egyptians had been renowned for miserliness for a millennium : because the infusion of Arab blood had made them generous, rural Egyptians would give their lives in ransom for any who sought refuge among them⁵⁹. Here, Kamil symbolized his sense of the Arab element as essential for the Egyptian personality, clearly valuing it above some of its other, autochthonous, constituents. Sometimes he tried to balance and interweave elements when facing Europe : as the heirs of two great civilizations, the Pharaonic and the Arab, it is "our right and duty to sit among the civilized nations" as an independent state⁶⁰. Kamil's paper, *al-Liwa'*, in 1906 still approved when secondary school pupils equally evoked the Pharaohs and the classical Arabs together as great "forefathers" who justified independence for Egypt : Europe had drunk deep of Arab science and philosophy⁶¹.

Kamil's youthful *Fath al-Andalus* thus solidified a sense of Arabness as part of the core of Egyptian personality that many acculturated Muslim Egyptians, were to develop in the nationalist movements—until it grew into pan-Arab linguistic nationalism in the late 1920s.

Egyptian and Arab Literary Responses to Muslim Spain After Kamil

The might, creativity and excruciatingly drawn-out end of Arab Spain continued, after Kamil's death in 1908, to spark vital poetry and drama among Muslim Egyptians, further shaping how they viewed Western powers and outside Arabs—and how those wider Arabs viewed Arabness and Egypt. Egyptian literary interest in Spain was always pan-Arabizing, both for Egypt's literary elite and in the wider range of Arab and Muslim populations whose emergent independence movements that Egyptian high literature nourished.

In the 1920's, as Pharaonism found shaky expression in creative literature, Egypt's pan-Arab historical consciousness was continuing to

grow within its matrix of multi-lingualized acculturation, sensitive to Europe's Islamophobic history. In late 1927, an Arabic play *The Enchantress* based on a French drama by Victorian Sardou (1831-1908) portrayed "the life of the Muslims and the Arabs of Andalusia and the persecution they suffered at the hands of the Spaniards". The play depicted torture of Muslims by the Inquisition and the expulsion from Spain of all Muslims who would not embrace Christianity. The free Arabic translation of Sardou's drama was made by "the [secular] lawyer (*al-muhami*) 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Bura'i"⁶²... —multi-lingualized acculturation. On a more intellectual level, the Paris-educated secular lawyer Muhammad 'Abdallah' Inan (b. 1896), who was simultaneously articulating neo-Pharaonism in the Liberals' *al-Siyasah*, had already published in 1924 his first book on the history of the Arabs in Spain—a sector of classical Arab history with which in the 1930's and 1940's he was to focus a new historiography of eternal conflict between Islam and a Crusader West capable of genocide. 'Inan's 1929 *Mawaqif Hasimah fi Ta'rikh al-Islam* (Decisive Moments in the History of Islam), which had gone through five editions by 1962, included a grim chapter on the victorious Castilians' attempts to Christianize the Andalusian Muslims by terror after the fall of Granada in 1492, culminating in the final exiling of them from Spain⁶³.

The classical Arabs' language patterns and their past in desert pre-Islamic peninsular Arabia, 'Abbasid Iraq, Andalusia etc., were salient in the poetry and dramas of the Turco-Circassian Egyptian Ahmad Shawqi—which on publication immediately electrified and transformed Arabs from Morocco to 'Iraq. Shawqi (1868-1932) was educated in France (in law) at Khedivial expense, and was long the Khedive 'Abbas' court laureate. Racially non-Arab, Shawqi grew up in a Turkish-speaking household, while French was the language of his formal education and intellectual culture : he early steeped himself in Victor Hugo, Musset and Lamartine, as well as such classical Arab poetical models as Ibn al-Rumi and al-Mutanabbi. Shawqi's situation as a Turco-Circassian in Arab Egypt sometimes influenced him to evoke both (a) pan-Islamist solidarity with the Ottoman Turks (after 1918 with Atatürkist ones for a time) and (b) a territorial Egyptian nationality open to all who lived in the homeland.

Works by Shawqi upon classical Arab subjects, some of them set in pre-Islamic peninsular Arabia, included his 1931 poetical drama *Majnun Layla*, his 1932 *Amirat al-Andalus* (inspired by his period of exile in Spain during World War I as a man of the Khedive 'Abbas) and his 1932 *'Antarah*. In accord with the ethnicism of classical Arabo-Andalusian sources, Shawqi in *Amirat al-Andalus* or *Ghaniyat al-Andalus* contrasted the poet-King of Seville, al-Mutamid Ibn 'Abbad and the Berber Murabit despot Yusuf Ibn Tashufin, whom al-Mutamid and other Muslim "Party-kings" (*muluk al-tawa'if*) of al-Andalus invited in to beat back the reconquista, which Ibn Tashufin did devastatingly at the battle of al-Zallaqah (1086). When al-Mu'tamid and the other party-monarchs called Yusuf in a second time in 1090 to again roll back Alphonso VI of Castile, Yusuf sent him into exile in Morocco to herd camels: al-Mu'tamid died there in chains, a pauper.⁶⁴ This play provides an interesting illustration of the speed with which Shawqi's poetry and drama were propagated across the length of the Arab world and the intense emotions they sparked. When, in 1933, the play was performed by a Fas troupe in Marrakish, which contains Yusuf's grave, the Moroccan poet Muhammad Ibrahim, a nationalist activist, wrote an ode defending Ibn Tashufin's actions as in defence of Islam, and mocking al-Mu'tamid and Shawqi. The luxurious hedonism of al-Mu'tamid—indeed that of the Spanish Muslims in general—was reviled and it was charged that al-Mu'tamid had made Alphonso such a menace in the first place by allying with him against other Muslim petty monarchs.⁶⁵

'Ali al-Jarim (1881-1949), a leading grammarian and key figure of the Cario Arabic Language Academy, often turned to Muslim Spain in the stream of long poems and novellas with which he evoked the classical Arab past. His 1949 *Hatif al-Andalus* recreated the lyrical love of the Spanish Muslim poet Ibn Zaydun (1003-1071) for Walladah, a princess of Cordova, while al-Jarim's novels *Sha'ir Malik* (A Poet King : Cairo, 1943) and *al-Faris al-Mulaththam* (The Veiled Knight) offered two more ultra-sympathetic portraits of al-Mu'tamid Ibn 'Abbad and yet another unfavorable one of Yusuf Ibn Tashufin⁶⁶.

The fall of Muslim Spain and the destruction of its Arab Muslim community under the Catholic-Christian successor-regime was developed as a metaphor for modern Arab vulnerability in the lead-up to the creation

of Israel in 1947-49. As Kamil's 1893 celebration of indigenous might already had in another way, the anger, fear and grief that Spain focussed in the Muslim Egyptian modern elite after 1940 further blended apparent contraries with galvanizing potency : (a) the classical Arabs' styles were further blended and revamped in defiance of the changes that the centuries had brought to Arabic speech ; (b) a multi-lingual penchant for more romantic French, English and American poems and histories about Muslim Spain ; and (c) contemporary dangers threatening Egypt as a specific inner unit within the wider contemporary Arab World. A case in point was a 1952 poetical drama *The Last Twilight of al-Andalus* (*Ghurub al-Andalus*) by the trilingual 'Aziz Abazah. This wove together motifs from Dozy, Lane-Poole, Ibn al-Khatib—and Muhammad 'Addallah 'Inan⁶⁷.

The published edition of this play carried an introduction by veteran secularist Taha Husayn that perhaps under-estimated the appeal long-past Arab poetry had for precisely those Egyptians most attuned to Westerners (a pattern set by Kamil earlier). For Taha in this spasm, only the literary habit of a (vibrant) classicist aestheticism made Abazah clothe his real concern—his homeland Egypt's decay under King Faruq—in the metaphor of the doomed, decadent court of Granada : at many points he evinced his native impulse rather to write directly about the general crisis Egypt faced around the creation of Israel, [and which was resolved by Nasser's 1952 coup-revolution]. True, Taha in 1959 knew "plots of the English and Israelites" and "Arab crises" were among the contemporary concerns that 'Abazah's Spanish tragedy would evoke in the minds of his 1952 Egyptian audience⁶⁸.

Abazah dedicated his 1952 play to the suffering "Egyptian nation", but it did not exactly atomize internal decay in any Arab-Muslim unit : the late classical Arab macro-past, its aesthetic idiom and the bygone western enemies threatening it locked into contemporary threats from various Westerners against a range of Arab lands, with few gaps or strains. At points, Abazah's Nasrid court of Granada offered some home truths about king Faruq's—yet more often cast light on the divided Palestinian national leadership of 1945-52 and in any case always remained itself. *Ghurub al-Andalus* sapped the insular Egypt-centricism remaining in Egypt in 1952. It hammered home that isolationist Arabo-

Muslim units that neglected mutual solidarity, would be conquered one by one---atomistic territorial nations are not viable in international relations. The emotional community the play creates was not insular particularism : it would make most Egyptian viewers feel with "a people who fell into the talons of a ferocious bird of prey for its body to be torn to pieces---your neighbour" (=the Palestinians as well as Spain's Muslims) ⁶⁹. Abazah's 1952 drama assailed the qualified extent to which Egypt's pre-Nasser establishment had adopted pan-Arabism, exposed by its refusal to genuinely fight in Palestine. As the Granada princess 'A' ishah puts it at the Egyptian court of Sultan Qaytbay : "in the name of Arabism and neighborhood I called you, and religion and the things that are sacred, and of blood-relatedness : I appealed to you and you turned me away... Islam will suffer terrible losses if you cannot bridle your passions" ⁷⁰. Yet Abazah had not penned an unnuanced polemic against Faruq's collapsing parliamentarist-monarchical regime : both the Sultan Qaytbay and the Mufti of Egypt give Princess 'A' ishah a hearing : Qaytbay might have overridden his more cold-bloodedly realistic military commanders and ministers and sent a risky Egyptian expeditionary force had not the besieged Granadans, starving and divided among themselves, given up when he was at the point of decision.

Abazah's 1952 play must stand as one of the most vivid evocations in Arabic of the ethos of the reconquista, which he incarnated in the persons of their catholic Majesties Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. He did empathically place in the mouths of some Spanish Catholic characters some powerful dialogue that got vividly across to Egyptians and Arabs how wounding the Muslim invasion and occupation was for the Spanish psyche in its own terms. His play more or less closed with the final entry of the Castilians into Granada in January 1492 and did not cover the later collective expulsions of Spain's Muslims. Given that it had been so vividly popularized by 1952 among literate Egyptians, though, the genocide cast its chilling shadow over the final scenes in which Abu 'Abdillah ("Boabdil"), the last petty king of Granada, surrenders the statelet to the besieging Catholic Spaniards led by Ferdinand. *Ghurub al-Andalus* nonetheless did inherit the fairly rich ambiguity of Egypt's long acculturated-Arabist tradition to the Christianity of Westerners, so vivid and intimate. Thus, Abazah painted the priest

Carlo, Ferdinand's emissary and negotiator, as a lethally plausible, machiavellian enemy. Yet, Abazah was careful, as Musa Ibn Abil-Ghassan exposes the clergyman's intended treachery, to have him distinguish true Christianity from it. "The treaty you offer" guaranteeing fair treatment for Muslims under Catholic rule "is meant only to usher in ferocity...By nature, you are ever the intimates of the Devil". Yet, it had not been by this spirit of deceitful hatred and violence that the message of Jesus brought light in so many gloomy ages and the Gospel from the sides of thrones guided to virtue and kindness⁷¹. Abazah apprised Muslim Egyptians in 1952 of the centrality in Ferdinand's regime of systematicizing clerics who would commit genocide against Muslims with gusto, yet he exonerated not just the Christian religion but some European governments. He broke with the Christian bloc-versus-Muslim bloc theme of acculturate Egyptian Arabism in depicting the King of Naples as guiding a state that "resists the aggression of the Franks against the Arabs in order to maintain the interests of his land"⁷². Indeed, the Neapolitan king voices distaste for the Castilian design to expel the Moors as contemptible in itself, not just for the poison it will inject into all international relations⁷³. Further downgrading blocs, and in contrast to Kamil's Ottomans and pan-Islamsim decades earlier, Abazah's play sometimes hinted that the Ottoman Turkish conquest of Egypt soon after the fall of Granada, ushered in oppression and disasters for the Egyptian Arabs likewise, albeit not so total or final as in Spain.

Abazah's 1952 recreation of the fall of al-Andalus carried forward Egypt's tradition of liberal Arabo-Islamism in the crucial roles it awarded women in "patriotism". Mustafa Kamil and his followers had, before 1918, called for almost equal education for women so that they could educate their children for the "patriotic" independence movement, albeit within the home. Muhammad 'Abdallah' Inan's attention from 1930 to the parts European women played in the Crusades in effect justified matching roles by Muslim women in medieval and modern resistance to European invasions⁷⁴. Vivid scenes by Abazah in 1952 highlighted 'A'ishah, the mother of Abu 'Abdillah, Buthaynah and other strong-willed Arab women in the "patriotic" faction in the Granada statelet that to the last strove to organize armed resistance and to involve outside

Muslim governments. Muslim Spain thus continued into the 1950s to pattern a widening of roles for women within the pan-Arab nationalism that was to develop under Nasser.

The glorious conquest and drawn-out loss of Arab Spain has continued to haunt pan-Arabs from the Gulf to the Atlantic. With hard-won integrity, they have advanced from Kamil's triumphalist wariness of harm from non-Muslim enemies, to the deeper engagement with self-penalizing attitudes with which Arabs recurrently wound each other and disintegrate their own states.

Almost post-modernist was the critique that Spain drew from the once-Nasserite Lebano-Syrian poet Nizar Qabbani. The romanticism that French and English literature patterned had long before taken Qabbani far from the systematic metrical moulds of the classical Arab poets : yet their lines and images had echoes, in his "Sadness in al-Andalus". As Kamil had almost a century earlier, Qabbani would have celebrated any auguries there that a new world-conquering Tariq or 'Uqbah Ibn Nafi' was imminent. In the event, Spain's cities inspired in him a sense of loss and danger. The dark eyes of the Christian Spaniards he saw manifest the past Arab presence : he perceives them as distant blood-relatives. In Cordova (Qurtubah) the scents of roses and oranges reminded him of the love-poetry of the long-dead Walladah, but the minarets were weeping ; Granada's architecture with pervasive moralistic Muslim calligraphy—"Allah is the only victor"—are a bygone love-tale : their beauty had witnessed that ingrained tribalism, the macabre "dialogue with daggers" and "hoof-like ideas" that continue to "crucify" the Arabs. Given his Syrian origin, Qabbani of course felt a particular relatedness to a Spain first conquered by the Syrian-based Umayyads who bestowed "a civilization...and health", and later the founder of its first independent—and greatest—Arabo-Muslim dynasty ⁷⁶.

Muslim Spain thus continues to nourish the sense of nearly all Arabic-speakers that they are knit together by a common past which founded shared positive and negative qualities. These now have to be restructured, and Muslim Spain is one sector of classical Arab history that secularoid Egyptian and Arab intellectuals are trying to see from new angles as one means to adjust and reorder personality.

Patterns In Modern Arab Perceptions of Spain

This paper has examined Mustafa Kamil's youthful play on the Arab conquest of Spain as one of the most interesting early Egyptian prototypes for an historical theme that was to become more and more central in all pan-Arab and Maghribi (North African) nationalism. *Fath al-Andalus* is not to be dismissed as a disoriented flush of late adolescence that does not fit properly in with that self-consecration to the homeland Egypt around which Kamil then proceeded to build his nationalist career. The sense of Egyptian nationalists in the 1890s, that widely-conquering classical Arabs in such farway places as Spain were connected to their selves, gave boundaries to the indigenous past that, sooner or later, could only work against territorial particularist nationalism when that was later made more rigorous.

Whether the works are early Egyptian ones such as those by Kamil or 'Aziz Abazah's 1952 play or recent West Asian Arab writings that also respond to new types of Arab fragmentation, there is no doubt that they all often select those aspects of classical Arab interaction with Spain that most speak to the crises of current Arabs. Nonetheless, these recreations of Muslim Spain also had aesthetic impulses to integrally renew some classical Arab sectors, notably in language. The celebration of the Arabs and Islam in Spain attached naturally on to those drives within earlier "Patriotism" in Egypt to maintain or restore the standard literary Arabic that the British wanted to phase out. Negative, but also positive, interactions with Westerners prone to imperialism have also helped direct Egyptians and other Arabs to Spanish themes. The Moors in Spain were much nearer—for some Europeans, disturbingly so—to the origins of the modern West than Pharaonic Egypt could ever be. The Arabs as benefactors who transmitted crucial science or philosophy to Europe have been as gratifying as crude conquests; for those who must so sweepingly borrow from imperial states. Spiritual excursions among the Muslims in Spain also have repeatedly expressed the hankering of modern dual-cultured Arabs for patterns of constructive interaction between Muslim Arabs and Christian and Jewish Europeans in history. Spain has offered indigenous entry into Europe in more ways than one for Arab intellectuals in whom multi-lingualism persistently fostered a

liking for Europeans and Westerners whose governments they have to resist.

NOTES :

Acknowledgement : This essay was guided by Geoffrey Jukes of Australian National University.

1. For British policies that threatened new generations of educated Egyptians with linguistic deculturation, see Dennis Walker, *Supra-Egyptians Islamic and pan-Arab identities and Acculturated Muslim Egyptian Intellectuals, 1892-1952* (Ph.D. : Australian National University 1992), v. 1, pp. 142-45, and 15-22.

2. Kamil was over-characterized as a proto-particularist Egyptianist by Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam and the Arabs : The Search For Egyptian Nationhood, 1900-1930* (New York : OUP 1986), pp. 11-13. Cf Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798-1939* (London : OUP 1970), pp. 199-209. A comprehensive ideological study is Fritz Steppat, *Nationalism und Islam bei Mustafa Kamil in Die Welt des Islams*, v. IV 1956, pp. 241-341.

3. The anti-Muslim imperial Frenchman Louis Bertrand observed in 1910 that it had become the fashion for Egyptian nationalists to go to Spain and meditate in the gardens of the Alcazar of Seville or in the Alhambra of Granada on the defunct splendors of Western Islam. Such Egyptians tended to ascribe to Europe's modern civilization an Islamic Saracenic origin, "the total annexation of France to Morocco". Quoted Lothrop Stoddard, *The New World of Islam* (London, Chapman and Hall, 1922), pp. 98-99. For an instance of citation of the Alhambra against the British as proof that Egypt's Westernizing-educated intellectuals would indeed be racially able to govern Egypt, Duse Mohamed, *In the Land of the Pharaohs : A Short History of Egypt* (London : Stanley Paul & Co. 1911), p. 5.

4. James Jankowski, "Egyptian Responses to the Palestine Problem in the Interwar Period", *IJMES*, v. 12 (1980), pp. 21, 23.

5. Ahmed 'Abd al-Rahman, "Mu'jizat al-Fath al-Awwal" (The Miracle of the Initial [Arab] Conquest [of Spain]), *Risalat al-Jihad*, January 1992, pp. 83-90.

6. The work *Futuh Misr wal-Maghrib*, written in Egypt by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam (d. 870-71) could have been known from manuscripts in Kamil's modernist-acculturated circle. It already had incorporated possibly folkloric elements about Roderick's alleged impregnation of the daughter of exarch Julian.

Purely mythic is the tale, repeated by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam, of a room to which every Christian King added a lock in protection of their sovereignty : only Roderick insisted on breaking it open—it held images of the Arabs who would soon conquer... Diego Catalan (ed), *Reliquias de la Epica Hispanica* (Madrid : Editorial Gredos, 1980) pp. 8-9. I am grateful to Michael Hall, editor of *al-Dad : A Journal of Arabic Literature*, Melbourne, for providing me with this item. In an instance of Libyan academization of Islamo-Arab Spain, Dr. Khalid al-Dufi of Ghar Yunus University has attempted a lengthy new synthesis of classical Arab materials on the conquest, set in context of preceding Arab expansion in North Africa. al-Dufi, *Ta'rikh al-'Arab fil-Andalus : al-Fath wa 'Asr al-Wulat* (Jami'at Ghar Yunus : 1980, 2nd ed.) pp. 11-192.

7. Mustafa Kamil, *Fath al-Andalus* republished (Cairo : 1973) p. 62. Page references henceforth are to this 1973 edition, which Professor Arthur Goldschmidt of Pennsylvania State University generously took the time to locate and airmail to me from Cairo at a time when he was writing two books of his own there. The play was earlier reprinted in 'Ali Fahmi Kamil, *Mustafa Kamil fi Arba'a wa Thalathina Rabi'an* v. 2, pp. 165 ff. The original edition was published in Cairo by al-Adad press.

8. Paris : Hachette 1854.

9. "al-'Alim Sédillot al-Faransawi al-Shahir" (The Famous French Scholar Sédillot) *al-Ustadh*, 20 December 1892, pp. 423-29. The article was as much by Mubarak as al-Nadim in the sense that al-Nadim in it printed in full Mubarak's foreword to the translation of Sédillot.

10. *Ibid.* pp. 425, 427.

11. Kamil's assimilation of a range of styles and writings of the classical Arabs is instanced in the mannered poetical dialogues with which he opened Scene 1 of *Fath al-Andalus*. The Byzantine beauty Maryam is manipulating the infatuation of 'Abbad to make him block the plans of his Arab masters to invade Spain. *Fath*, pp. 23-25. Dr. Michael Carter, an expert on classical Arab grammarians and high literature, assessed that "these two pages do capture the medieval [Arab] ethos, largely because they are entirely within the convention of the love poetry of the period. You can verify this by browsing through Ibn Hazm's *Tawq al-Hamunamah*, which is more or less an anthology of Andalusian love poetry with all the theory added in the form of commentary". Letter from Dr. Michael Carter, Senior Lecturer in Arabic, Department of Semitic Studies, Sydney University, 2 August 1982.

12. *Fath al-Andalus'* Arabo-Muslim heroes are harmoniously one in their ideological dedication to expand the realm of the universal Caliphate centered in Damascus. Kamil did not mention such personality clashes and jealousies as that the Arab governor of North Africa Musa Ibn Nusayr when he joined

his conquering lieutenant Tariq Ibn Ziyad at Toledo whipped him and put him in chains for refusing to obey orders to halt in the early stage of the campaign. Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs, from the Earliest Times to the Present*, tenth ed., (London : Macmillan 1970) p. 496.

13. *Fath*, p. 25.

14. See ref. 27.

15. *Fath*, p. 46.

16. Maryam warned 'Abbad that if the Arabs conquered Spain, far from Constantinople though it was in the far West, it would give their conquests such impetus that "the sons of your homeland" Byzantium too soon would cry in vain from Arab prisons. *Fath*, p. 25.

17. *Fath*, p. 52. Among the classical Arab sources, the classical Arab historians al-Maqarri and Ibn Khaldun ascribed to Musa Ibn Nusayr the idea that the Muslims should cross the Pyrenees, fight their way through Europe ("the land of the Franks") and join hands through Constantinople with the Caliphs in Damascus. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 499.

18. In a 1947 collection of classical Muslim biographies, 'Inan quoted Ibn Khaldun's impression that Ibn Nusayr considered fighting his way from Spain through Europe to "the Abode of the caliphate" (Damascus). 'Inan was elated that the reconciled Musa and Tariq, their minds once more concentrated upon the coordinated conquest of non-Muslim Europeans, finally crossed the Pyrenees for a time, taking the state of Languedoc, and Lyons. 'Inan, *Tarajim Islamiyyah Sharquiyyah wa Andalusdiyyah*, 2nd ed. (Cairo : Maktabat al-Khanji, 1970), pp. 134-135. 'Inan saw Musa's thrilling idea as practicable because "Christianity" at the time could not have unified its warring armies and tribes against "victorious Islam" : he blamed the faint-hearted Caliph al-Walid Ibn 'Abd al-Malik for ordering Musa not to take the risk, but instead to return to Damascus. *Ibid* p. 135.

19. *Fath*, p. 28.

20. *Fath*, pp. 60-61.

21. *Fath*, p. 27.

22. *Fath*, p. 48.

23. However, some classical Muslim writers—and modern Egyptians who drew on them—were unsure of the racial descent of Tariq Ibn Ziyad al-Laythi : al-Idrisi and Ibn al-'Adhari discussed if, as well as probable Berber tribal origin, Tariq might rather have been a Persian from Hamadan who became a client-affiliate (*mawla*) of the Arab Ibn Nusayr. 'Inan, *Tarajim*, p. 131. Before being appointed Governor of North Africa, Musa had served as a deputy of a governor of al-Basrah, a borderland in which Arabs and Persians mingled. *Ibid* pp. 126-27.

24. *Fath*, p. 34.
25. *Fath*, p. 35.
26. *Fath al-Andalus*, p. 42.
28. *Fath*, p. 35.
29. *Fath*, p. 35.
30. *Fath*, p. 53.

31. Representative of Kamil's play is Ibn Nusayr's respectful description of Caliph al-Walid as entrusted with "the Supreme Imamate", *Fath*, p. 32. It has to be borne in mind that al-Walid Ibn 'Abd al-Malik (Caliph 705-15) was one of the fervently religious Umayyad Caliphs. Previous Caliphs of the dynasty had vainly negotiated with Christians to acquire the basilica of St. John the Baptist, Damascus; al-Walid simply confiscated it and turned it into a mosque. He also built fine mosques in Mecca and Medina. He granted his provincial governors full freedom of initiative to conquer and Islamize wide areas of Central Asia, as well as Spain, although he did not direct the conquests himself. Art. "al-Walid", *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition (Mic.). Kamil was well aware that al-Walid allowed his provincial governors the initiative in regard to the conquests. When Musa wrote to the Caliph al-Walid for instructions as to whether to invade Spain, al-Walid's reply delegates the choice to Musa. *Fath*, p. 31.

32. *Fath*, p. 35.
33. *Fath*, p. 61.
34. *Fath*, p. 56.

35. This is a translation of Steppat's concept of "oberflächliche Religiosität", "Nationalismus und Islam Bei Mustafa Kamil", *Die Welt des Islams*, iv (1956) pp. 269-71.

36. Kamil's triumphalist, militarist vision of classical Islam took scant account of Islam's moral priorities, expressed in the Prophet Muhammad's warning to victorious Muslim troops that they had returned from the lesser struggle (*al-jihad al-asghar*) to the greater struggle (*al-jihad al-akbar*), that to subdue their own passions "as slaves of Allah". Narrated by Jabir Ibn 'Abdallah, this *hadith* is not from the six "sahih" canonical collections of *hadiths*, which, though, need not mean it is not authentic. It appears in a collection known as *Kanz al-A'mal* by al-Daylami, which is an extract of Tabarani: Abu Anees of *Australasian Muslim Times* and Dr. Shabbir Ahmed, Imam of Rooty Hill Mosque, Sydney, Australia. For a text of the *Hadith* see Mulla 'ali al-Qari, *al-Asrar al-Marfu'ah fil-Akhbar al-Mawdu'ah*, ed. al-Sa'id, Bayrut 1404H, p. 127: *Hadiths* 480 and 481. See also Alevin Moore Jr, "The Sword of Islam" in *Hamdard Islamicus*, v. 14 : 1 (1991), pp. 15-19.

37. For Kamil's allegorization of topical local conflict with SC and

Armenian collaborators in *Fath al-Andalus*, see Steppat, *Nationalismus und Islam*, p. 260; cf. Muhammad Muhammad Husayn, *al-Ittihajah al-Wataniyyah fil-Adab al-Mu'asir* (2 vols, Bayrut : Dar al-Irshad 1970) v. 1, pp. 222-23. Tignor argued that Nubar tried to delay extension of British control after 1882, albeit to maintain his Turcophone clique's authority and wealth, not out of nationalism. Robert L. Tignor, *Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt 1882-1914* (Princeton University Press, 1966) pp. 174-75. It is to be noted that the magazine *al-'Urwat al-Wuthqa*, which al-Nadim's master Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad 'Abduh published from Paris in 1884, had condemned Nubar as predisposed to betray Egyptians not just by his not sharing their Islam but also by his lack of any Arabness ("Arab zeal") : see *al-'Urwat al-Wuthqa* (Cairo : Dar al-'Arab, 1957) pp. 375, 389.

38. *Fath*, p. 61.

39. *Fath*, p. 59.

40. *Fath*, p. 26.

41. *Fath*, p. 28.

42. *Fath*, p. 38.

43. 'Afa' Luti al-Sayyid-Marsot assessed that Kamil's "support for Turkey on religious grounds...frightened away" from his movement many prominent or gifted Copts attracted by its drive for independence and Egypt-centred motifs. al-Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt and Cromer* p. 160. Sala mah Musa's social radicalism, marked even from his youth before World War I, was rare in his sect, but he did faithfully illustrate some perceptions—and misunderstandings about—Muslim Egyptian pro-Ottoman pan-Islam that alienated from Kamil Copts who might otherwise have joined up. In his 1927 *al-Yawm wal-Ghad*, Musa depicted the Khedive 'Abbas, *al-Mu'ayyad* and Mustafa Kamil as responsible for "an apostasy from the patriotic idea" : all "returned to Islam as the community bond (*jami'at al-Islam*)", saying that Egypt was a possession of the Ottoman State. Musa vehemently assailed *al-Mu'ayyad* and *al-Liwa'* for claiming that Egyptians were "Ottoman [subjects] obliged to fight the Macedonians to defend 'Abdul-Hamid and his subjects, that 'Abdul-Hamid was the Caliph of the Muslims whom every Egyptian was duty-bound to obey. Mustafa Kamil and the editors of his paper almost caused a communal clash among [the Muslims and] Copts through this stupidity and raving". Musa's *al-Yawm wal-Ghad* cited Muhammad Muhammad Husayn, *Ittihajah* v. 2, p. 225. In his 1947 autobiography, Musa again wrote that the collective Coptic minority shunned the nationalism articulated by *al-Liwa'* and *al-Mu'ayyad* because it mingled recognition of Ottoman suzerainty with demands for Egypt's independence. *The Education of Salama Musa*, 1st ed. L.O. Schuman (Leiden : E. J. Brill 1961) pp. 42-44. Musa took at face value, as a dangerously unitary Ottomanism, *al-Mu'ayyad* editor 'Ali Yusuf's call for

Egyptians to send representatives to the CUP-restored Ottoman Parliament : *ibid* p. 34. This missed Khedive 'Abbas' "Arab Caliphate" undermining of all Istanbul regimes—and that Ahmed Lutfi al-Sayyid assessed Yusuf's call as only 'Abbas' ploy to block an Egyptian constitution or parliament.

44. For argumentation by al-Nadim, Kamil's formative mentor, that the fatal decay of the classical Arabs—and, later, that of the Ottoman Turks—began when they engaged officials of other religions and races, see Charles Wendell, *The Evolution of the Egyptian National Image. From its Origins to Ahmed Lutfi al-Sayyid* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1972) p. 150.

45. One of the most oppressive SC figures from the viewpoint of Egyptians striving for independence was 'Abdallah Pasha Sufayr al-Shami ("the Syrian"). Born in 1854, he migrated to Alexandria when 16 and rose swiftly under the British from a clerk in the European Department, to Assistant Commissioner of the Alexandrian Police, to Director of the Intelligence Police Force in Egypt (under the Ministry of the Interior) from 1891 on. Muhammad Farid, elected leader of al-Hizb al-Watani in February 1908 following Mustafa Kamil's death, suspected that the SC agent Sufayr was channelling funds to that section of the Party trying to bring him down from the presidency. Farid, *Awraq Muhammad Farid*, v. 1 (Cairo : al-Hay'at al-Misriyyat al-'Ammah lil-Kitab, 1978) p. 69.

46. "Katib" (pseud.), " 'Antarah fi Baris : 'al-Fada'il al-'Arabiyyah fil-Bilad al-Gharbiyyah" ('Antarah in Paris : Arab Virtues in the Western Lands) *al-Jaridah*, 3 March 1910, p. 5. Shukri Ghanim's historical drama played at the Odeon on 10 February 1910 and was published as *Antar : Drame en 5 Actes en Vers* (Paris : Libraire Theatral 1910). Antoine Boudot-Lamotte, *Ahmad Shawqi : L'Homme et l'Oeuvre* (Universite de Lille III : Service de Reproduction des Theses, 1974) v. 1, pp. 564-65. The reception at which Kamil paid tribute to Shukri was held in January 1906. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Rafi'i, Mustafa Kamil, *Ba'ith al-Harakat al-Wataniyyah* (Cairo : np. 1939) p. 390.

47. For the emigre activities of Ghanim and George Samne from Paris, Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, p. 286.

48. "Bayn al-Turk wal-'Arab—Baqiyyah fil-Zawiyah" (The Turks Versus the Arabs—The Conflict Unfolds Further), *al-Muqattam*, 20 April 1910, p. 1.

49. Kamil. "Nur al-Islam fil-Afaq" (Islam's Light Fills the Horizons [=World]), in 'Ali Fahmi Kamil, *Mustafa Kamil fi Arba'ah wa...* v. 2, pp. 4, 9.

50. *Fath*, p. 34.

51. *Fath*, p. 550-56.

52. *Fath*, p. 56.

53. Hitti described "the story of the violation of [Julian's] beautiful

daughter by Roderick,...usually offered in explanation of Julian's co-operation" with the Arabs as "purely legendary". Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 494. Kamil was to denounce in terms of the Islamic shari'ah, and the need to maintain the authority of fathers, the elopement of his older political rival 'Ali Yusuf with the daughter of the Head of the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad in Egypt. Kamil, "Min Fadiah ila Fadiah : As'ilah Sariyah" (From Scandal to Scandal : Frank Questions), *al-Liwa'*, 6 September 1904, p. 1. Kamil thus voiced conservative Islamic opposition to too much change in relations between the sexes over many years. Cf. his acceptance of monogamy but opposition to unveiling and free-mixing, which had corroded Europe : Salah 'Isa, "'ustafa Kamil Mufakkiran Burjwaziyyan", *Qadaya 'Arabiyya* (Bayrut), March 1976, pp. 112-14.

54. Kamil named the country that Musa Ibn Nusayr and Tariq Ibn Ziyad conquered as al-Andalus, translated by us as "Spain", not Andalusia. Unlike some Arab writers he never trans-literated "Espan̄". Kamil indicated his awareness of some dominate Gothic group or community : Musa speaks of Roderick as "King,...lord of the Goths" (*Fath*, p. 34) and 'Abbad to Musa calls the group that the Arabs will be fighting in Spain "the Goths" (*al-Outiyyaina*) glossed in brackets by Kamil as "inhabitants of al-Andalus". *Fath*, p. 31. It is significant that Kamil in the play never derived from al-Andalus any term to denote a Spanish national community. The Goths were the only community in Spain that he identified by name, although it is unclear if he equated Spain's general population with them.

55. Text of letter from Kamil in 'Ali Fahmi Kamil, *Mustafa Kamil Basha*, v. 3, p. 65. Kamil's successor as head of the Patriotic Party, Muhammad Farid, in 1908 expressed similar respect for the energy and skill with which the Bulgarians and their monarch had wrested full independence, while voicing his Party's traditional support for Ottoman suzerainty, there "Zakariya Sulayman Hayyumi, *al-Hizb al-Watani wa Dawruhu fil-Siyasat al-Misriyyah, 1907-1953* (Cairo : Wikalat Fabrant, 1981) p. 196. A cold-blooded description of the early Greek uprisings against Turkey in which a follower of Kamil sought model approaches for Egypt's independence movement against Britain was Ahmad Hilmi, "al-Istiqlal! al-Istiqlal!" (Independence! Independence!), *al-Liwa'*, 9 August 1906.

56. Arthur Goldschmidt Jr, "The Egyptian National Party 1892-1919" in P. M. Holt (ed) *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt* (London : OUP, 1958) p. 312.

57. *Fath*, pp. 60-61.

58. For early contemptuous dismissal by Kamil of 'Urabi to a French audience see his "Un Alliance Qui S'Impose", *La Nouvelle Revue*, 15 November

1895, pp. 378-80. An interesting aspect of this article is its awareness of long-standing tensions at the time of the British conquest between the Ottoman Turks and Egypt's quasi-separatist 'Allid House : the British used it to manipulate the Ottoman Turks to facilitate their conquest.

59. 'Ali Fahmi Kamil, *op cit*, v. 6, pp. 211-12.

60. Charless Wendell, *The Evolution of the Egyptian National Image from Its Origins to Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid* (Berkely : University of California Press, 1972) p. 248.

61. Ahmed Hilmi, "al-Istiqlal! al-Istiqlal!" (Independence! Independence!), *al-Liwa'*, 9 August 1906.

62. "al-Sahirah 'Ala Masrah Dar al-Tamthil al-'Arabi" (*The Enchantress on the Stage of the Arabic Theatre*), *al-Muqattam*, 4 November 1927. Instancing simultaneous development of Pharaonic theme, in Arabic drama in the 1920s and early 1930s, was "Tutankhamun", *al-Muqattam*, 6 March 1924 p. 6.

63. 'Inan, *Mawaqif Hasimah fi Ta'rikh al-Islam* (4th ed Cairo : al-Khanji, 1962) pp. 311-25.

64. For a critical discussion of the plot and (prose) dialogue of *Amirat al-Andalus*, see Antoine Boudot-Lamotte, *Ahmad Shawqi*, v. 2, pp. 555-64. Shawqi drew on al-Maqqari's *Nafh al-Tib fi Ghusn al-Andalus al-Ratib*. *Ibid* p. 557. However, Shawqi could also have drawn on earlier treatments of the theme by the modern Lebano-Syrian drama. The play *al-Mu'tamid Ibn 'Abbad* by Sunni Ibrahim al-Ahdab had steeped the medium of drama and songs implanted by missionary educators with the very old rhetoric and ethnic viewpoint of Andalusian Arab authors. A 1910 performance by the Ottoman League in Bayrut "shows you the civilization of the Arabs in al-Andalus and the surpassing power, luxury and pleasure they commanded—until Yusuf Ibn Tashufin, the king of Morocco, invaded it, seizing Ronda, Cordova and Seville". "*Bayrut : Riwayat al-Mu'tamid Ibn 'Abbad : Ta'rikhiyyah Dhatu Khamsati Fusul*" (Bayrut : *Al-Mu'tamid Ibn 'Abbad : The Five-Act Historical Play*, *Lisan al-Hal* (Bayrut) 15 April 1910, p. 3.

65. Mustafa al-Qasri, "al-Shi'ru fi Khidmat al-Haqiqah wal-Ta'rikh" (Poetry in the Service of Historical Truth), *al-Bahth al-'Ilmi* (Muhammad V University, Rabat) v. 1 : 1, January-April 1964, pp. 113-28.

66. Details of al-Jarim's education and writings in Yusuf As'ad Dagher, *Masadir al-Dirasat al-Adabiyyah*, pt. 2 (Bayrut : Matabi 'Lubnan, 1956) pp. 247-48 ; Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ashma'u, "Ali al-Jarim", *Da'wat al-Haqq* (Rabat) June 1977, pp 77-79.

67. List of sources, 'Aziz Abazah, *Ghurub al-Andalus* (Cairo : al-Sharikat al-'Arabiyyah, 1959) p. 194.

68. *Ibid.* pp. 13-14.

69. *Ibid.* p. 153.

70. *Ibid.* p. 153.

71. *Ibid.* p. 115.

72. *Ibid.* p. 18.

73. *Ibid.* pp. 112-16.

74. 'Inan recounted the intrepidity and political ambition of Louis IX's wife Margaret de Provence, who went with him on the seventh Crusade into Egypt. And he was grateful that one extraordinary Egyptian woman, Shajarat al Durr, quickly took the lead in organizing the resistance that expelled Louis after her husband, the Sultan al-Salih, died. *Mawaqif*, pp. 145-161.

75. Text of Nizar Qabbani, "Ahzan al-Andalus" (Sadness in Andalusia) in Muhammad 'Abd al-Ghani al-Misri and Majid Muhammad al-Bakir al-Barazi, *al-Lughat al-'Arabiyyah : Thaqaifah 'Ammah* (Amman : Dar al-Mustaqbal, 1988) pp. 521-23.

POETICS OF KANNADA VACHANAS

It is impossible to maintain unity of poetics in India, a country where poetics are being written in 22 constitutionally recognised languages including English and scores of other languages at varying degrees of orality. In the past we had well-developed traditions of classical Tamil and Sanskrit poetics, which form, as many learned scholars think is Indian poetics. However, both Tamil and Sanskrit poetries of the succeeding centuries could renew themselves only by violation of established poetics. Various forms of Bhakti movement that flooded India during the medieval period did not produce a well-defined poetic. Nevertheless, one cannot conclude that Bhakti movements were an expression of pure spontaneity. A close analysis of the poetic practice of Bhakti poets reveals that it is governed by a clear subversive poetics. The inbuilt poetics of our medieval masters are yet to receive the critical attention it deserves.

It may be pointed out in passing that any new movement in our language poetries is an offshoot of a new poetic. After all, the rules of well-articulated Sangam poetics stemmed from the actual practice of poets which had preceded it. Anandavardhana's insights into poetic language are based on the practices of classical authors like Vyasa, Valmiki and Kalidasa and great masters of Prakrit poetry. In the 20th century, the birth of new Indian literatures was coeval with the birth of new poetics, which, though not always systematically expounded outside poetry, nevertheless informs the new poetic practice. In the more recent past in India, the diverse regional versions of poetry written by many marginalised sections like Dalits, tribals and women can also be seen as being informed by a new poetic. A close examination shows that this new inbuilt poetic is only an amalgam of various traditional forms of poetics, old and new, native and alien. A certain Anglo-American modernist poetics informed poetry in most Indian languages during the heyday of Indian modernism, which is being critiqued by the poetries of the marginalised at the moment.

It is small wonder that many forms of anti-establishment poetries of India are turning for inspiration, among other things, to the seemingly other-worldly Bhakti movements. Feminist poetry in Kannada, for instance, time and again returns to the image of Akkamahadevi, a radical woman saint of the 12th century. Telugu Leftist poets invoke the Bhakti poet Palkurike Somanatha, who forged a new powerful idiom of native people's poetry in the 13th century. The struggle against casteist and sexist oppression is what brings together poets divided by several centuries. In the situation when our Bhakti poets are reasserting themselves in the present, an in-depth examination of Bhakti poetics is of utmost importance today. For, some of the leading Indian poets today are engaged in an intense dialogue with Bhakti traditions as they are with various alien forms of poetics. Some of our well-known modernist bilingual poets like Dilip Chitre, Arun Kolhatkar and the late A. K. Ramanujan also show the impact of Bhakti poetry. Of these, Dilip Chitre and A. K. Ramanujan have themselves been celebrated translators of Bhakti poetry.

Though Bhakti movement was a Pan-Indian phenomenon, it spoke in many regional and sect-specific languages and dialects of India. Further, not all Bhakti movements were anti-establishment to the same degree. On the whole, Kannada Saiva Bhakti Movement was more rebellious than Tamil Saiva Bhakti Movement. The Nirguna Bhakti of Kabir and the Warkhari sect of Maharashtra, both Vaishnava movements, were much more radical than Vaishnava Bhakti movements of Karnataka or Tamil Nadu. It is absolutely necessary to make a detailed study of different Bhakti movements to discover what was common to all of them.

An attempt is made in what follows to outline briefly the poetics of Kannada vachanas.

The Vachana movement is a collective creative outburst of 12th century Karnataka that challenged the ruling brahmanical theology and hegemonic feudal values presided over the Kshatriya-Vysaya combine. The origins of the movement were clearly subaltern : the first vachana poet was Channiah, of the untouchable caste whose younger contemporaries were Kakkayya and Ketiah, also from untouchable castes, and Dasimaiah, of the weaver caste and Revanaisiddha of the shepherd caste. The small beginnings made by these poets snow-balled into a huge socio-religious

movement under the leadership of Basavanna, a rebel Brahmin. The heyday of the movement coincided with Basavanna's life in Kalyana, the imperial capital of Kalachuryas. He was the Finance Minister of the empire. Saint poets from diverse caste, backgrounds, but mostly artisan, gathered in Kalyana and composed vachanas — a form of free verse — in the polemical context of intense dialogue with each other and with their opponents by other hegemonic sects like Brahminism, Jainism and reactionary forms of Saivism. This period saw the emergence of two hundred vachana poets, of whom over twenty were women. Their stout defiance of cast and sexist discrimination and the sanctity of age-old scriptural dictates, forced them into an unequal fight with the hegemonic castes and classes. Then followed an outburst of violence, which culminated in the assassination of the emperor and Basavanna's mysterious passing away. The followers of the new sect were forced underground for a century, only to get imperial patronage during Vijayanagara empire, in about the 14th century. From then onwards, the movement fossilised into another caste and began to be absorbed into the ruling order.

The brief but dramatic period of collective poetic efflorescence of some uppercaste radicals and many suppressed castes, lasted for nearly thirty years. It was basically an urban movement, which is testified by the fact that the majority of poets were from urban artisan castes.

It is clear from the practice and pronouncements of vachana poets that they challenged the literary canon as much as they did the scriptural canon. These half-articulated and highly suggestive statements strewn among their works show that they were deeply concerned about problems of language and poetry.

Asymmetry between the word and the world

The word *vachana* has been translated by A. K. Ramanujan as 'what is said'. But this dictionary meaning of the word is not what is meant by the Vachana poets. The word *vachana* is the synonym of words used in hagiographic traditions to mean 'utterance based on direct

personal experience.' These synonyms include words like *vani* (as in, 'Gorakhvani') and *vakh* (Lallavakh). One of the synonyms of 'vachana' used by Dasimiah is *soolnudi* meaning 'wise saying', words based on wisdom of 'seeing'. Unless informed by the power of the 'seen', words spoken are 'just similes' according to the following vachana by Adiah :

Four *Vedas* are similes :
 So are sixteen *shastras*,
 Eighteen *puranas*,
 Twenty eight sacred agamas.
 Thirty two *Upanishads*
 Seven million great *mantras*,
 Similes, just similes, the whole lot.
 Unnumbered words, scriptures,
 Systems of logic and grammar;
 All these are similes
 Many many *mantras*, *tantras*
 The mastery of *yantras* or black magic;
 Similes, all these.
 Hearing the unheard
 Attaining the unattainable
 Penetrating the impenetrable;
 Similes always.
 Unable to still similes
 Unable to go beyond the web of similes
 Unable to free themselves
 From the thick paste of similes and nonsimiles
 Unable to see the truth
 Of Sowrastra Someshwara
 These simile-bound people
 Make similes with similes
 Come into being through similes.

Simile (*uvamai*), according to the Sangam text *Tolkappiam*, is the source of all poetic language, including higher poetic functions like *ulurai* and *irrakkuurai*, which correspond to the function of *dhvani* (suggestiveness) extolled by Anandavardhana. But the above vachana considers as similes even scriptural texts of both vedic and non-vedic schools. In addition,

various paranormal siddhis of yogis are classed under 'similes' as opposed to the truth represented by the poet's deity. This vachana shows that vachanas are opposed to all scriptures, sacred symbols and powers as they are not expressive of experienced truths. By bracketing the source of poetic speech on the one hand and conceptual and discursive texts on the others, Adiah also blots out the difference between the conceptual and the metaphorical.

At the same time, vachana poets also opposed existing forms of secular poetry. This is expressed in a vachana by Allamma :

Objective poetry, subjective poetry,
Naturalistic poetry —
Words spoken on these three foundations
Are all on this side.
Who knows then on the other side,
Beyond?
These people do not even know where it is.
These people prattling like a flock of parrots;
However can they know You,
O Goggeshwara?

Vastuka and *Varnaka* are the two genres of Kavya mentioned in Sanskrit poetics. In addition, Allamma names a third genre — *bhoutika* — that may have been prevalent then. Poets composing such kavyas are repeating their lines mechanically like 'a flock of parrots'. They are all on this side of language whereas Allamma is on the other side — 'beyond.' Declares Allamma in another vachana :

Poets of the past
Are the children of my slaves.
Poets of the future
Are the infants of my pity
Poets of the divine worlds
Are my abject slaves
Brahma and Vishnu
Are the inhabitants of my demesne
O Goggeshwara,
You are my father-in-law
And I, your indestructible son-in-law

The following vachana by Siddharama points to the meaninglessness of all units of language (lines, words, sentences, texts) :

When strokes combine with strokes,
Letters are formed;
When letters combine with letters
Words are formed;
When words combine with words
Multitudes of books are formed;
But Kapilasiddha Mallikarjuna,
Is not
In the strokes or words,
Letters or multitudes of books
He is nothing. He never was
'He is' 'He is Not'.
Both these statements take nothing
Away from Him.
Great. His vastness.

Why, then express through language and similes at all? This question is debated intensely between Muktayakka, a woman-poet, and Allamma. She challenges Allamma 'If you knew the self, why talk about it? Why not be silent like my wise brother?' Replies Allamma :

If you know yourself
all speech becomes knowledge of the ultimate.
If you forget yourself
all speech becomes maya

So, according to Allamma, considered wisest by his fellow poets, it is the force of self-knowledge that illuminates vachanas. Without it, vachanas, like other uses of language, metaphorical and conceptual, are emptied of all significance.

The best of vachanas, dramatise in language the paradox of both accepting and rejecting similes. Vachana poets express reverence to their ancestors in the tradition because their sayings are informed by experience of the self. They reject scriptures because they are not animated by the same force of inner truth. At the same time, unlike the Vedas and agamas, vachanas do not claim scriptural status. The ultimate scripture,

according to vachana poets, is the unmediated vision of the self. Vachanas are only steps leading to that experience. An acute awareness of the ultimate asymmetry between the words and the world led them in two directions : (a) creating fresh similes and demolishing or revolutionising old ones, (b) breaking metaphorical relationship through the paradoxical mode of *bedagu*.

The two possibilities are expressed in the following vachanas, the first by Basavanna and the second by Allama :

When you speak
Your words must be
Like a string of pearls, the glow of ruby
Crystal-clear, needle-sharp;
When you speak,
Linga must say, pleased :
"Quite so, quite so".
When speech does not square with deeds,
How can He be pleased,
Kudalasangama Deva? (BSV 218)

While acting
One must act the act violating the act, dear one.
While speaking
One must speak the speech violating the speech, dear one.
While holding the body
One must hold it without holding it, dear one.
O Goggeshwara
While standing still
One must
Stand
Still
In You. (APV 482)

Asymmetry between words and deeds :

The vachana quoted above by Basavanna concludes that, unless words square with deeds, the Lord is not pleased. This points to another main concern of vachana poets : the asymmetry between words and deeds.

Vachanas degenerate into *vacha-rachana*, a speech-construct, not only when unsupported by the power of the seen and experienced, but also when it is not charged with the force of actions or deeds. It is this separation between *nade* (deeds) and *nudi* (words) of Brahmins that the untouchable woman poet Kalavve exposes and satirises in a vachana of hers :

What Brahmins eat adorns the grass,
And a dog licks it up and goes away.
What cobblers eat adorns the grass,
Now brahmins' ornament.

The irony of the scene depicted by her consists in this : both uppercaste Brahmins and untouchable cobblers defecate the something on grass. The uppercaste Brahmin's defecation is licked by a 'dog', a lowly beast. The cobbler also defecates on grass, which brahmins use as *dorbha* in their sacred rituals. So she concludes brahmins who call themselves high-born shall go to the worst of hells!

The discrepancy between words and deeds, not only among their opponents, but even among themselves elicit ridicules from vachana poets. Thus Machideva lashes out at fake vachana poets who practice the opposite of what they preach :

The vain entertainers
Who speak strings of *vachanas*;
Are they devotees, O friend?
Vachanas are not like them
Nor are they like *vachanas*.
The reason is this;
At their back.
Only the concerns of flesh and fortune;
In front of them,
Just the haystack of words.
Like a dog wagging its tail
On seeing his master,
Their words.
O father, Kalidevaradeva.

The inbuilt poetics of Kannada vachanas can be summed up as follows :

(1) Vachana as a species of composition is opposed to texts, both scriptural and spiritual;

(2) Unlike the opponents' texts, vachanas embody an authentic struggle to weld together language and experience, words and deeds. Otherwise, they denegerate into *vacha-rachana*, speech-constructs;

(3) Vachanas are not scriptures in themselves. They are merely approximations (word-steps) towards the inner seeing embodied in one's words and actions.

When confronted with the light of inner experience, Allama bids goodbye to all similes. However, the most poignant and dramatic moments of vachanas happen when words struggle to satirise the gap between language and experience, word and deed or when they engage in the endless battle of uniting them. It is one such struggle that makes Channiah, the Cobbler, cry out in anguish :

When will I be rid
Of the doubtful seeing of one thing
Through another?

Niranjan Mohanty

**OBFUSCATION AS A COLONIAL PARADIGM :
A STUDY IN GOPINATH MOHANTY'S DĀNĀPĀNI
OR THE SURVIVOR**

There has been, over the years, a prolonged but unsettled debate on several issues crucial to colonialist discourse, such as the question of subjectivity and otherness, of power and powerlessness, of reality and constructedness. In a period ("Post-colonial" or "Postcolonial"?) when colonies are no more colonies, and when resistance to hegemonic and colonial imposition (both historically and culturally speaking) is becoming increasingly felt, it is certainly interesting to re-read the literary texts which so eminently posit the glimpses of the colonial experience.

This paper, makes an attempt to show how Gopinath Mohanty's *Danapani* or *The Survivor*¹ uses obfuscation as a colonial paradigm. In other words, this paper proposes to show how apart from marginalisation, subjugation, subservience, which constitute the colonial paradigm, obfuscation was a nascent instrument to augment the process of colonialisation.

II

David Murdoch in a bibliographic essay observes :

To be colonized meant not to have such essential state functions as control of territorial borders, formulation of foreign policy, or independent direction of trade, it also meant cultural marginalization.²

The two terms 'imperialism' and 'colonialism' have often been used synonymously until recently. The motives behind imperialism and colonialism remain controversial, if not entirely confounding even today. D. K. Fieldhouse in *Colonialism* (1840-1975) tried to show the difference. He observed :

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It was only in the early 1950's that a conventional distinction came to be made between imperialism and colonialism. Imperialism was now restricted to the dynamics of empire-building, and for Marxists, to Lenin's "the highest stage of capitalism" in more developed countries. Colonialism then emerged as a general description of the state of subjection — political, economic and intellectual, of a non-European society which was the product of imperialism.³

It is, therefore, evident that colonialism as a product of imperialism, is nothing but a strategic "exploitative enterprise by the West which forces the underdeveloped to give up their freedom, wealth and cultural heritage in exchange for civilisation."⁴

Amartya Sen in a perceptive article "Indian traditions and the Western imagination," observes what the colonialism has done to the Indian identities, both "internal" and "external". Sen argues :

The self-images (or "internal identities") of Indians have been extremely affected by colonialism over the past centuries and are much influenced — both collaterally and dialectically — by the impact of outside imagery (what we may call "external identity"). However, the direction of the influence of Western images of internal Indian identities is not altogether straightforward. In recent years, separatist resistance to Western cultural hegemony has led to the creation of significant intellectual movements in many postcolonial societies — not least in India. This has particularly drawn attention to the important fact that the self-identity of the postcolonial societies is deeply affected by the power of the colonial cultures and their forms of thought and classification.⁵

The colonial experiences of the colonised variously jettisoned a stiff resistance to the forces of the attitudes behind colonialism. Homi Bhabha in "Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism"⁶ (1983), characterises the colonialist discourse through strategies like ambivalence, mimicry and hybridization. He argues that the colonial object is viewed both as an object of desire on the one hand, and of derision on the other. As a result, colonialism incorporates an ambivalence into the colonised. The colonial psyche not only posits this ambivalence, resulting from its attitudes towards the colonised, but also transmits this ambivalence to the colonised, with a view to creating

the colonial subject in the shape of Mimic Man. This is the native figure who is recognisably the same as the colonizer, but who is non-white. These Mimic Men are a disturbing image to the coloniser whose self-assurance is shattered at the sight of grotesquely displaced image of himself. This process of creating the Mimic Men is in itself subvertive because, as Bhabha writes, "the look of surveillance returns as the displacing gaze of the disciplined, where the observer becomes the observed and the partial representation rearticulates the whole notion of identity and alienates it from essence."⁷

III

It shall be shown how Mohanty's *Danapani* exposes the painful realities of the colonial experience, not only in terms of creating what Bhabha calls the Mimic Men, of generating ambivalence in the psychic make-up of the colonized, but also in terms of signifying obfuscation as a colonial paradigm.

Mohanty's *Danapani (The Survivor)* depicts the story of a "junior clerk", Balidatta's diverse facets of survival, culminating into his achievement as the highest boss of a British Trading Company. His wife, Sarojini, is beautiful, ambitious. It is perhaps her oniric determination and co-operation that contributed greatly to her husband's achievement. Yet she has been portrayed as a very mysterious character. Mohanty never fails to harp on the hidden nuances of a woman's psyche. Yet because of the dream to conquer great heights, she has to sacrifice a lot. Even if she is not properly educated, she is a woman with her sense of identity and dignity. In her lonesome moments, she analyses herself and tries to legitimise and authenticate her own identity. She has a purpose in living. To validate this purposefulness, she makes attempts to earn favour of the Bosses of her husband and she succeeds. Mohanty presents Sarojini's sense of restlessness when Balidatta and she visited the "Second Sahib or Junior Sahib or Some Sahib" (p. 38) Mr. Mahapatra's house :

Yes, she was some one. She had her place, in the crowd, in life's carnival. She had a form, a shape, a home, a certain purpose.

What was her purpose? Within the privacy of her mind, life's meaning had turned to dust. Her entire being, diminished beyond recognition, looked in vain for a place to hide its face. She had no place here. Was she then only an onlooker? Trying to get a grip on life, only to find each time, that it had slipped away, leaving her empty handed! She was nothing — a mere lampwick that flamed red for a moment and then into black, reeking soot. That was her identity. (*The Survivor*, pp. 45-46).

But Sarojini always dreams of her identity, her happiness, even if she realizes in the new place that “her life seemed to be turning to ashes” (71). Slowly she consoles herself. She does not lose hope entirely. She cogitates :

One hundred and fifty rupees a month. It wasn't so much, but it would grow. Her husband's ambitions and endeavour were not in proportion to his size! She would become rich — But could wealth give her everything? Could it bring happiness? Well, may be not; but with its help, she could atleast fake happiness! (p. 72)

But as the narrative progresses, we find a sea-change in Sarojini from a mere uneducated woman to the Leader of the Women's Club; from a mere caged bird to a free one who could flirt with the Number One and number two bosses of the company, Mr Sharma and Mr Ranjit Babu, from an innocent but ambitious woman to a slander-ridden, repentant woman; from the wife of a junior clerk to the wife of the number one Sahib of the British Company, from a mere woman to the expectant mother. In spite of the achievement, the promotion, which were due to individual endeavour, partly due to destiny, the personal relationship between Balidatta and Sarojini has been ruptured, has been considerably obfuscated : Mohanty appropriately limns this process of obfuscation, caused indirectly, obviously, by the colonial experience :

A condolence meeting was convened. They stood in silence for three minutes in memory of the deceased. Ten minutes of speeches, and then returned home to enjoy the unexpected holiday. Balidatta came home. In the bedroom all alone, Sarojini lay on the bed, with her face buried in the pillow, weeping. Balidatta did not enter. He felt a hot flame searing his ... (p. 208)

The process of obfuscation reaches climatic heights when the novel comes to an end. Balidatta, after his return from the office, discovers that his wife Sarojini is not there at his residence. He is informed by Harsha, a *Chaprashi*, that she has gone out with "That babu, the babu who used to come in a motor car." (p. 222). Balidatta is immediately reminded of Ranjit Babu who went on a long leave. Mohanty's description of Balidatta's psychological torment is appropriate and captivating :

Suddenly the hot blood rushed to his head. A new layer of existence. He continued to sit there, biting his lower lip. He could no longer see the gross scene in front of him; but the visions of horror were vivid. The Ghosts that haunted his mind were dancing madly all around him. Torturing him; setting fire to his bones. Oh, what agony! Where was the greatness, the success? For whom? What had he achieved? He stared into the darkness, both his hands pressed to his head. This was the path on which he would have to travel; it had no end. This was the unresolved story of his life. The search for the Daily Bread had cost him all his days and nights, and in return, his own body was in flames...

"Call my stenographer, at once!" Yes, this was best. Here he was the master! This was the factory : here life had no access. (p 223).

Balidatta, the protagonist, ruefully tastes the fruits of colonisation as he discovers that many other people who have been colonised have access to his private life — the life that exists between a husband and wife — the most sacred and the most secret. Balidatta pays a heavy price to realize the dream-narrative of his success.

Mohanty's *The Survivor* permits a kind of reading in which, in the process of creating, what Bhabha calls the Mimic Men, in the personalities of Mr Shaw (originally, Mr Sahu), Mr. Mohapatra, Mr. Sharma, Mr. Ranjit Babu, Hari Babu, Bira Babu, Krushna Babu, Gopal Babu, Madhu Babu, Keshav Babu, Bara Babu or the Head Clerk, the author seems to have been resisting them by way of exposing their emptiness within. Balidatta, despite his professional success, becomes the most successful Mimic Man.

Not only Balidatta, almost all the 'mimic men' created, fall victim to the obfuscation which is instrumental to designing a colonised identity.

Among these Clerks, bara babus, office bearers, there seems to exist no other relationships except what is designed and defined by the Company office. They are more formal, intolerably artificial. Each character is ambitious, loyal to the Sahibs or bosses, and each one tries to ride over the other getting some favour.

A little promotion would bring them closer to the corridors of power. That's why Balidatta is very much envious of Venkat Rao. He wants his wife Sarojini to decorate herself like Venkat Rao's wife :

Have you seen Venkat Rao's wife? How fresh she looks, even after all that hard work, just like the flowers in her hair. (p. 16)

Sarojini, like any other woman would not tolerate her husband praising someone's wife. She reveals the truth by retorting :

Oh, don't talk about Venkat Rao's wife! She has been treasuring up that one sari of her for the last six years! And the lovely hair you admire so much — only jute braids bought in the market. Yes, she does take pains over the flowers, I admit : she takes them off at night and stores them in a damp cloth, so they look fresh again in the morning. (p. 16)

Balidatta praises Venkat Rao's wife for her songs and finally blames the Oriya women :

I really wish we could be like them. I wonder why you Oriya women have to spend half your lives in the Kitchen. What's so great about that? No wonder the Telugu people tell us : 'Oh, you Oriyas will eat all your money away! Do you have silver and gold for breakfast?' (pp. 16-17)

Even if Venkat Rao and Balidatta are colleagues, serving the same British master, envy and jealousy eat Balidatta. Once Balidatta visits his friend Bannu's house, where they begin to gossip about their friends. But when Balidatta leaves Bannu's house and reaches the road, he mutters out of disgust :

"Idiots!" he said striding briskly, *mimicking* Mr. Mohapatra's voice. "Lunatics!" (p. 70) [*Italics mine*]

Balidatta's pride is wounded when Shontu Da indirectly blames him for being a blind follower of the British and for being vulnerable to the coloniser in terms of losing his identity. Indirectly the author obfuscates the identity of these office-goers through Shontu Da, who observes :

What's one's introduction anyway? What people call us, what they identify us with — it's only a label! You can change the label, but not the thing. The label cannot describe the object, can it? And yet, we are all busy trying to collect labels. That's the trouble! (p. 70)

In fact, Balidatta keeps himself busy "trying to collect labels," from the post of a junior clerk to the highest boss of the Company. In the process of collecting these labels, Balidatta not merely obfuscates his own identity or self but also obfuscates his relationship with his wife and other fellow colleagues. As the supreme boss of the Company, he had cut Venkat Rao to sizes, allowing him to work in the Works Department of the Company. As the boss, he delivers a lecture on his being a strict disciplinarian, a work-addict. He intends to know about Bannu from Venkat Rao, who informs him that Bannu left the Company long ago and is now a "prominent citizen," (221) a businessman. Balidatta's professional ego seems to have been injured and that is precisely why he is annoyed with Venkat Rao's revealing such stories. Mohanty rightly surfaces the injured pride of Balidatta as he writes :

Venkat Rao joined his hands in namashkar and walked away. Balidatta turned towards his car. All his annoyance was focused on Venkat Rao. If you encourage them even slightly, they'll start their gossip! He had done the right thing by cutting him short. Venkat Rao should realise that times had changed! (p. 222)

Not only with Venkat Rao, but with all other members, his relationship has been obfuscated, estranged, since the "times had changed." One is immediately reminded of Balidatta's position in the beginning of the novel, when he accompanied the *bharua* with manure at the orders of Mr. Mohapatra for Memsahib. One is also reminded of the loathsome

behaviour of the Sahib when Balidatta felt accomplished and privileged in the tour with the Sahib. Balidatta has mastered the "art of oiling" (p. 4), and 'tact' (p. 60). With the first promotion Balidatta's hopes and dreams multiply. He explains to his wife Sarojini, the art of his success :

If luck holds, we can become Mahapatra, we can become the Sahib. All we needed is a few years of hard work and a bit of tact! Now how do I explain 'tact' to you? There is neither an Oriya equivalent nor do we Oriyas know what tact is. Tact is the ability to charm others, to read their minds, to get them to do what *you* want — by strategy, by strength or by skill! To know the appropriate words for each occasion, to be able to produce cream out of water! To be able to skin a man alive so smoothly that he doesn't even blink! This is what *we* call ability! (p. 60)

Thus it is evident that Balidatta has mastered that art which remains unknown to the Oriyas, and luckily or unluckily for Balidatta he prides over knowing this art. In this cited paragraph Balidatta uses *we* instead of 'I'. In the first instance he identifies himself with the Oriyas with a note of derision. In the second instance when he uses *we*, he seems to have appropriated to himself a British personality. However, in both the cases he obfuscates his own character because of the impact of the British colonialism. He is busy in collecting, what Shontu Da, once stated, "labels." Similarly Sarojini, the protagonist's wife, has obfuscated her own self by accepting Balidatta's inspired suggestions to learn English, to go to the club; to be a partner in the games, to be a leader of the Women's club, to be close to his bosses to make his path of promotion smooth. As a result, she obfuscates her own real self, her innocent self, besides obfuscating her relationship with her husband and other friends like Mili, Nili of the Women's Club. After the accidental death of Mr. Sharma, Sarojini got herself alienated from all, even from her own past. The author sums up the modes of obfuscating the time and people :

The past was dead. Mr. Sharma, a pleasing memory that had turned into a nightmare. Ranjit Babu? The other day Balidatta had informed her that he had gone away on long leave, on grounds of health. A

brief glow that had brightened her existence and then faded. Mili, Nili; the Women's Committee. Involvements and commitments. They belonged to the night; the morning had wiped away the memory and the pain. (p. 211).

And by the time the novel comes to an end, we know that Sarojini has gone out with Ranjit Babu in his car. Even if Balidatta achieves everything, becomes the boss of the Company, becomes a father, his relationship with his wife surfaces ruptures. This is how Sarojini obfuscates her relationship with the husband.

Both Balidatta and Sarojini and the rest other characters in the narrative have been given the position and status of the "other" by the British Sahib. In course of the narrative the position changes, so that Balidatta crosses the border of the "other" and when he is promoted to the supreme boss of the company, he begins to treat his colleagues as the "other." It is, therefore, evident that Balidatta, by becoming the highest boss of the company, has appropriated the ambivalent nature of the coloniser which posits a feeling of apparent superiority but in essence, the protagonist Balidatta, remains a Mimic Man, busy with labels, and nothing else. The survivor only survives, losing and rupturing the central or seminal part of his own identity. Mohanty, through the character of Balidatta, intelligently but masterfully, presents how obfuscation is instrumental to dampening and dehumanising the essential self — the self that discovers and recognises the ultimate truth of his own helplessness. Only in such moments the mimic man, drops his mask and comes to terms with himself. Besides revealing the reversal of fortune in Balidatta, I think the author, from the very beginning of the novel has been aiming at offering a kind of resistance to the colonial experience. The Sahib and the Memsahib do not have any names, whereas their dog has a name "Dicky." Even Sarojini's resistance is reflected when she calls the Sahib "That bald, red-faced ape!" (p. 9). And when Balidatta begins to treat others as the "other," he is not happy at the personal level as his relationship with Sarojini seems to have been deeply obfuscated.

Seen from this perspective, obfuscation can be treated as a colonial paradigm. It is interesting to notice how this paradigm gets ultimately subverted resulting in the promotion of Balidatta to the highest post of

the British Trading Company. Mr. Sharma dies in an accident. Ranjit Babu also takes long leave from the Company. Bannu, Balidatta's intimate friend, leaves the Company and starts a business which makes him well off financially. The forces of obfuscation which alienated the characters from one another, were finally responsible for striking back at the British Trading Company — a symbol of colonial legacy. The final metaphor of obfuscation is interesting, self-assertive and self-subversive in its own way. Mohanty appropriately posits this metaphor into the narrative so as to suggest how the process of obfuscation has ultimately been directed against the British :

Shadows of existence. They come in crowds, play their parts, and disappear. This has been happening through the ages. What remains, when the fanfare and the spectacle are ended, are the eternal beings. Man and woman. The circumstances don't matter, the story could take place anywhere. The soil is implanted with seed; the earth grows expectant with the warmth of new life, the hope of new creation. The pregnant earth, exuberant with the joy of conception, is complete in itself; it seeks no attachments. The earth has realised itself : it is the unending store from which creation renews joy. The earth abides (p. 211).

Thus the book ends with a new hope, a new horizon that subverts the colonial experience of suppression and oppression and steers clear the weather for a new dawn in which Sarojini assumes the status of a mother and Balidatta — replaces Mr. Sharma. Therefore, it is evident that obfuscation that began as a colonial paradigm is being directed against the coloniser.

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MULTILINGUAL TEXTS

The relation between literature and language is so axiomatic that monolingualism as the essential condition of the making of a literature hardly has ever been a matter of controversy. The employment of more than one language as significant constituents of a literary text, therefore, has been regarded improbable. A literature, whichever community might have produced it, is universally identified with reference to one language. The possibility of one language becoming the media of more than one literature is no longer a matter of dispute — America, Canadian, Australian literatures are glowing evidences, but the possibility of one literature written in more than one language sounds almost absurd. The absurdity stems from the traditionally accepted nexus between a given language and literature. My intention is not to challenge the notion of infallibility of the language-literature equation, but to look for evidences where more than one language have indeed contributed to the making of one integrated literary text, and thus to problematize the role of bilingualism or multi-lingualism in the literary production of a given community.

Monolingualism as a prerequisite of literature is recognized even in bilingual societies : they can have, and indeed our historical experience provides enough fact to support it, two distinct literatures written in two separate languages. The necessity for the employment of two languages in the same text does not arise at all. A bilingual community can certainly evolve a literature which is thematically and ideologically unified, but still will it remain linguistically heterogeneous, the literary texts being composed in separate languages. Although the history of contacts between different languages is fairly old, and limited bilingualism had been a part of the social reality of many communities, the bilingual situation had been hardly recognized as a factor of much consequence in the process of literary production. We do not have any strong evidence of interaction between languages spoken by different communities so

as to affect the linguistic textures of literary texts in the ancient period. All traces of such interactions have been either effaced by the rhetoric of purity of language which disallows the entry of foreign linguistic elements into the literary dialect, or more carefully incorporated through translation, a device which creates a space for foreign language in the native language and culture. The Alexander-Porus encounter as described by the Greek historian and later celebrated by several Indian dramatists is precisely a situation of linguistic encounter as well, and in both cases the linguistic differences have been successfully submerged within a monolingual texts. An *abhangā*¹ of Namadev, the fourteenth century Maharastrian saint-poet, which celebrates the *Vastraharana* (the cloth-stealing) episode of the *Bhagavata*, presents a situation of a greater



featuring Hercule Poirot, for example are quite conspicuous by frequent use of French phrases (and occasionally, short sentences) as a part of a literary device to underline the foreignness of the Belgian sleuth, without, I hope, causing any serious problem of comprehension : "Of what are you thinking so deeply, *mon ami*?", "He was just holding forth on the subject, *n'est ce pas, mon ami*?", "Good, *continuez*", "*Voyons, Mademoiselle Annie*", or "*D'abord*", he said, "we will advertise in the papers", and similar utterances add a special flavour to the Christie narratives without creating any particular linguistic impediment to the readers.² Surely, the narrator expects her reader to have an elementary knowledge of French for the complete comprehension of the text, and an understanding of the eccentricities of the charming 'foreigner'. In fact all such attempts of creating linguistic-mosaic can be futile and only idiosyncratic unless supported by a bilingual readership. Madhav Julian's³ poem *Begamece Virahagit* (Queen's Song of Separation) is one such example. This poem in the form of a love-letter to Shivaji by one of the ladies in Aurangzeb's palace is infested with Persian words with such abundance that it provoked Anant Kanekar, one of the contemporary of Julian, to write a parody entitled *Begamecyu Virahagitas Sivajice Uttar* (A Reply to the Queen's Song of Separation addressed to Shivaji). In it Shivaji replies that he understands only two words, namely *natha* and *swami*, (both meaning 'lord') and concludes that "Should you wish Shivaji, the simple Maratha, to understand the letter, please send a Persian-Marathi dictionary as well." It is worthwhile to remember that Madhav Julian, a scholar of Persian, had indeed compiled a Persian-Marathi dictionary, and the poem was written at a time when the question of "purification" of Marathi was being addressed by a group of Marathi scholars. What is important is the existence of a tension between the writer's urge to experiment with several languages and the anxiety of the community, (at least of one dominant section of the literary community) for the retention of linguistic purity.

The legitimacy of 'literary bilingualism' (i.e. the employment of two languages in the same text, both in the forms of code-mixing and code-switching) may be defended on two grounds, (a) as a part of the representation of the 'actuality' of linguistic activities, and (b) as a natural form of expression that already exists at various levels of communication

in a bilingual society. The first defence is too fragile, to say, the least. Neither aesthetics nor history compels any writer of a historical play or novel on the life of Plato or Julius Caesar, say in English or in Hindi, to write the dialogues either in Attic Greek or in Latin for the sake of "actuality". Both Alexander and Chandragupta in Jayshankar Prasad's extremely popular play *Chandragupta* (1931) speak twentieth century Hindi with as much ease as Shakespeare's Hamlet speaks Elizabethan blank-verse. The representation of the linguistic "actuality" has never been considered as one of the prescriptions of poetics.

However, it is neither forbidden nor is it impossible. There are such instances in the literary traditions of dominantly monolingual countries such as England, and I would like to draw your attention to Shakespeare's *King Henry the Fifth*. Here is an English play, where one finds abundant use of French : one whole scene (III, V) is in French, one scene (IV, iv) is partly English, partly French, and one scene (V, ii) — the last one is a remarkable instance of juxtaposition of two languages. In addition to these, there are large number of French words and phrases occurring in the play. It is not that Frenchmen in this play speak only French and Englishmen only English. Charles the Sixth, the king of France, speaks perfect English, as does his son, Louis of Dauphin, and the queen Isabel ; and they converse in English as expected in an English play. The use of French in this play, therefore, has not been prompted by any ridiculous motivation of adherence to the historical reality. Rather it is a conscious dramatic device to create a bilingual text whose success rested surely on a French knowing English audience of the Elizabethan period. It requires a bilingual audience not only to appreciate the hilarity involved in the French scenes, but also to recognize the ingenuity of the dramatic policy to highlight language as a force that divide as well as unite. The comicality of the French learning scene (III, v) beginning as follows⁴

Katherine	Alice, tu as été en Angleterre, et tu bien parles le langas
Alice	Un peu madame
Katherine	Je te prie, m'enseignes. Il faut que j'apprenne à parler. Comment appelez-vous la main en anglais?
Alice	La main. Elle est appelée <i>de hand</i> .
Katherine	<i>De hand</i> . Et les doigts?

- Alice Les doights, ma foi, j'ai oublié les doights, mais je me souviendmi les doights. Je pense qu'ils sont appelés *de fingres*.
 Oui, *de fingres*
- Katherline La main, *de hand*. Les doights, *les fingers*. Je pense que je suis le bon écolier.

is not an expendable interlude, but an integral constituent of the dramatic structure. There are fine wordplays, at times with a lewd abandon⁵, exploiting the bilingual condition fully. The scene IV in Act IV exploits it even further, this time with the introduction of an interpreter who mediates between an Englishman and a Frenchman. And finally, the scene ii of Act V, celebrates the union between France and England in the persona of Katherine and the King Henry, through a linguistic melange.

- Katherine Your majesty shall mock me. I cannot speak your England.
 King O fair Katherine, if you will love me soundly with your French heart I will be glad to hear you confess it brokenly with your English tongue. Do you like me, Kate.
- Katherine *Pardonnez-moi*, I cannot tell vat is 'like me'.
- King An angel like you, Kate, and you are like an angel.
- Katherine [To Alice] *Que dit-il-que je suis semblable à les anges?*
- Alice *Oui, vraiment, sauf votre grâce, ainsi-dil-il.*
- King I said so, dear Katherine, and I must not blush to affirm it.
- Katherin *O bon Dieu, les langues des hommes sont pleines de tromperies.*

I need not go into the relation between the language and diplomacy or language and love which has been problematize in this play, but like to emphasize on the employment of two languages in one text recognizing the possibility of a literature composed in many languages. Many of the modern critics, however have expressed their reservations against such linguistic diversity in the Shakespearean play. Andrew Gurr, for example, says, "the play puts up a considerable show of non-communication."⁶ But such employment of foreign speech on the popular stage was not an innovation by Shakespeare ; Gurr himself has given examples of several precedents. Yet the critics, with all humiliation I submit, have failed to notice the importance of a stylistic experimentation so effectively performed by Shakespeare. The problem of "non-

communication" that Gurr highlights, is a problem of a monolingual literary community stubborn in its resistance against literary bilingualism. The language-mixing, in monolingual literary culture scan at the most tolerated as a literary curiosity or an occasional aberration. In a multilingual country, such as India, on the other hand, this phenomenon is too wide-spread to be dismissed as a literary *tour de force*.

II

Code-mixing and code-switching, which are generally considered to be the two dominant features of bilingual or multilingual societies, can also be appropriated as useful categories in the understanding of the Indian literary activities. Code-mixing and code-switching, in literature, can have larger ramifications depending upon the modality of the literary structures, dramatic or narrative, or narratorial strategies or upon the writers' motivation. Let me give an example from an Oriya narrative being serialized in a literary magazine, where one notices an attempt to interweave Bengali with Oriya to create an uneven linguistic texture? ⁷

puni College Street-are mu. barṣā asarāe hoiyaichi. barṣā hele kalikātā rastā abasthā, bises kari College Street ... Presidency College samnā purunā dāsgupta store, International Book Store āu ākhaku disuni — tā agare samāntarāl bhābe calichi footpath bahi dokānsabu — aneile hipad. pākhaku gale dokān calāithabā adhāpaḍuya tokāsabu pacāri pacāri athay karidebe — “*dādā, ki cāy? O dige kena, e dige āsun. Ki cāy bolun, bole phelun ... nā thāke to ene debo, āsun, kabe lāgbe, bolun.*

has lāguthāe, birakta bi lāguthāe.

This opening paragraph of a narrative projecting the predicament of an Oriya youngman on his way to meet his girl friend certainly aims to create his sense of alienation by foregrounding the linguistic 'alienness' of the environment, but it also assures a total communication. And it can be further assumed that the intended reader has enough linguistic competence to respond to the demands of the narrative. The Bengali utterances are not meaningless noises, but integral parts of a coherent narrative. The two linguistic codes in the narrative, however, maintain

their separate identity; it is not their coalescence, but their juxtaposition that makes the linguistic texture of the narrative conspicuous. This device of juxtaposition of two languages is more frequent in Indian dramatic literature than in the narratives. Mr. Mill, the District Commissioner of Sibsagar, who is a British character in the Assamese play *Maniram Devan* (1948), for example, speaks English throughout the play,* and it has not caused any resentment from the Assamese audience / readers. One example will suffice :

- Mill Damn nigger! It is only a plea to reinstate the Ahoms on the throne of Assam.
- Holorid *devan khub cunning, dhurta ache.*
- Mill He is a courteous rebel, *bahut bhadra ache.* And Holorid ...
- Holorid Your Excellency.
- Mill He should be taught a good lesson. He must bear the brunt of it — I will never let him alone.
- Haranath Carkar bāhādurar ādes hale yi kono upāyere michā pramān di hale-o tāk bandī karī rākhibā pārō.
- Mill Inspector! Know it for certain it is not for the Empire that we are here *kārbār-bānijya* — Trade — yes, it is trade that holds upto this beautiful land of yours or else — by this time we would have been off. (I. i)

It is not that such linguistic textures are only contemporary or modern features of Indian literature. Surely, English as one of the languages of Indian dramatic literature, has been frequently employed in Indian plays since the mid-nineteenth century. English as well as Indian languages as spoken by Englishmen have been fully represented in many Indian plays evoking its hegemonic status and at times making them objects of ridicule. The choice between the employment of two languages in one text on the one hand and of the effacement of the multilingual reality on the other was available to the Indian writers, and they had made their choices according to their understanding of the demands of the literary community and of aesthetic necessity. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's use of a few short Sanskrit sentences in the dialogues between two characters in the novel *Kapalkundala* (1866) appears so appropriate in the context of the narrative, adding strangeness and terror to it and establishing an unequal power relationship through

the juxtaposition of Sanskrit and Bengali. But whether this juxtaposition involves English or a modern Indian language, or Sanskrit, this is not a new phenomenon in Indian literature.

One of the conspicuous, and quite well known features of the Sanskrit play is the multiplicity of languages employed in them. To quote Macdonell, "In accordance with their social position, the various characters in a Sanskrit play speak different dialects. Sanskrit is employed only by heroes, kings, Brahmins and men of high rank; Prakrit by all women and by men of the lower orders. Distinctions are further made in the use of Prakrit itself. Thus women of high position employ Maharastri in lyrical passages, but otherwise they as well as children and the better class of servants speak Saurasani. Magadhi is used, for instance, by attendants in the royal palace, Avanti by rouses or gamblers, Abhiri by cowherds, Paishachi by charcoal burners, and Apabhramsha by the lowest and the most despised people as well as barbarians."⁹

The mutual comprehensibility of the speeches used in the Sanskrit plays must have been very high and the cultivated audience did not feel handicapped by the continuous code-switching signalling the caste, class and gender identity of the dramatic personae. But to treat these speeches as "different dialects", as Macdonell does, is not only to marginalize the problem of linguistic texture of Sanskrit plays, but also to ignore a larger socio-linguistic issue of Indian cultural history. Macdonell (and many other scholars) dismisses, instead of foregrounding, the linguistic distinctiveness of a play like *Sakuntala*. The Sanskrit situation differs from the more familiar language-dialect dichotomy that exists in various narrative-dramatic texts in many languages. The language-dialect relationship, as understood popularly, is a relationship among the dialects, privileged and unprivileged, standard and non-standard, with their distinct identities of class and power. But the relationship between the speeches employed in *Sakuntala* or *Mrcchakatika* is a relationship between different languages : Sanskrit and Prakrit belonging to different periods of development in the history of Indo-Aryan languages. Macdonell's inclusion of Apabhramsa too in his list of "dialects" used in Sanskrit plays makes his observation even more controversial, Apabhramsa being recognizably a phase later than that of the Prakrit, and not a dialect of Sanskrit.

Winternitz explains the phenomenon, what he calls a “peculiar characteristic” of Sanskrit drama as a reflection of “the conditions of real life.”¹⁰ He points out that employment of Sanskrit and Prakrit by characters was not so codified as to prohibit any alternation between them. Rather there are instances of same characters using both Sanskrit and Prakrit reflecting a condition of bilingualism. In *Mrcchakatika*, the harlot speaks Prakrit according to the convention, but recites Sanskrit verses. “The harlots”, Winternitz observes, “at whose place was witnessed much of social culture, understood it clearly and were capable of expressing themselves in Sanskrit and Prakrit.”¹¹

The recitation of verses, in Sanskrit, however is not by itself a strong evidence of one’s ability to speak or to understand the language but it is an indication of the existence of codes of accomplishment involving training in classical literature. Even today we have people around us capable of reciting large number of Sanskrit verses which they had learnt as a part of their religious and cultural training. The Sanskrit-Prakrit hierarchy has been exploited fully and admirably by playwrights to achieve effects of surprise. In Bhasa’s *Pañcaratra* Arjuna speaks Prakrit, only when he is in the guise of Brihannala, an eunuch, but Sanskrit with his brothers to underline as it were his two different identities, both sexual and social. When King Virata wants him to narrate the events of the battle; Arjuna (as Brihannala) begins the narration in Prakrit, but when the king interrupts and asks him to speak in Sanskrit (which the king thinks the appropriate medium for the theme) Arjuna obeys the instruction. In *Mudraraksasa*, a spy appears as a snake-charmer and in this role he speaks Prakrit, but the moment he is alone he soliloquizes in Sanskrit, and discloses to the audience his real caste identity, Brahmin. In other plays of Bhasa also one notices this device of code-switching from Prakrit to Sanskrit to reveal one’s identity, which in Aristotelian term may be described as a device of ‘recognition’. In *Kamabhara*, Indra in the guise of a Brahmin-beggar speaks Prakrit but in his soliloque the king of gods switches to the language of gods. Prakrit has been constantly used as a language of disguise in *Pratijñā yaugandharayana* : Raumanvat and Yaugandharayana speak Prakrit while in disguise but use Sanskrit elsewhere.

The evidences do not necessarily support the view that the Sanskrit drama reflects the actual linguistic situation in the country — the Prakrits' used in the plays had already become literary languages — but this practice of using several languages in one text must have been sustained by a social attitude to the plurality of languages in the society, which is fully confirmed by the idea of *kavyapurusa* as expressed in Rajashekara's *Kavya Mimamsa* : ¹² *sabdarthau te sariram, Samskrtam mukham, prakrtam vahuh, jaghanamapabhramsah paisacam padau uro misram etc.*

The Sanskrit-Prakrit juxtaposition continued for many centuries, though in a different way. The *ankiya natas* of Sankaradev, for example, though written in Assamese, employs Sanskrit verses quite extensively. ¹³ These verses are not spoken by any character in the play, but by the *Sutradhara*, the narrator, who also interprets them in Assamese. These Sanskrit verses, act as links in different episodes in the drama thus becoming as essential part of the texts. The employment of Sanskrit in the sixteenth century Assamese plays surely does not reflect the linguistic situation in that part of the country, but it confirms the existence of a literary bilingualism and the legitimacy of linguistic juxtaposition. The artistic experimentations with languages and their social sanctions are further evidence by the emergence of artificial literary languages from time to time, through a process which can be described as code-mixing.

A body of literature produced by the Buddhist monks during the first few centuries after Christ was written in a language, an artificial one, termed by many scholars as Buddhist Sanskrit or hybrid Sanskrit. The 'language' in which texts like *Lalita Vistara* and *Mahavastu* have been composed ; is a mixed Sanskrit. ¹⁴ T. Burrow writes about this language rather disparagingly : "In it the original Prakrit appears half Sanskritised, the words being in the main restored to their Sanskrit phonetic form while the Prakrit grammar is largely retained. For instance Pa. *bhikkhussa*, gen. sg. of *bhikku* 'monk' (Skt. *bhiksu*) is not replaced by a regular Sanskrit *bhiksos*, but is mechanically changed to *bhiksusya*. It may be assumed that for a period, in certain circles, such a mongrel language was actually employed by those who wished to employ the superior Sanskrit language but were not able to master its grammar." ¹⁵

What T. Burrow (and also Franklin Edgerton to a large extent) fails to appreciate that this “mongrel language” did not emerge out of the inability of a group of monk to master Sanskrit. The Buddhist world would not have preserved their works with such care and veneration had they been a linguistic embarrassment for it. Nor did the Buddhists attempt towards Sanskritisation of Pali enhance their prestige. This view of Edgerton has been convincingly counteracted by Jean Filliozat. Buddhists have written both in proper Sanskrit and in proper Pali. It will be ridiculous to suggest that “the hybrid Sanskrit” did not have the sanction of the Buddhist world and that it was a creation of a few dimwits and dropouts from Sanskrit class. On the contrary, there had been a conscious design to create a new language. Whether it was a step to “the final passage from the regional and sectarian Prakrits to the all Indian classical Sanskrit”¹⁶ as suggested by Jean Filliozat, or not, it was certainly an experiment with two languages prompted by the linguistic diversity in the country. The experimentation was made neither to replace Pali nor to vulgarize Sanskrit but to create a special literary language, in all probability prompted by the existing multilingualism in the society. It is only a multilingual society that can provide space for such experimentations.

The more widely known phenomenon of code-mixing in Indian literature is the *manipravala* style.¹⁷ The term literally meaning “gems and coral”, the former designating “Sanskrit” and the later “Malayalam / Tamil”, Manipravala grew into a respectable literary language in Kerala and widely employed by Malayalam writers. Texts written in this mixed language must have enjoyed considerable reputation as evidence by *Lilatilakam*, a fifteenth century Sanskrit work of unknown authorship, which not only defines *Manipravala* as “bhasa-Samskrtayoga” but enumerates the features of this literary language. In the earlier phase of the development of *Manipravala*, one notices three devices of language-fusion : (1) mixing Malayalam words and Sanskrit words having inflectional endings, (2) Sanskritizing the Malayalam words, (3) adapting inflectional uniformity in nouns and adjectives in Malayalam. But the most important thing is that it became, as observed by Sudha Gopalakrishnan, “so multivalent and comprehensive that it set the aesthetic standard in literature for ages and periods.”¹⁸

Manipravala also developed in Tamil : its origin has been traced in the inscriptions and copper plates of Pallava and Pandya kings from the 5th century onwards. In Pallava period, we are told that it was even used as a court language for official communication. Later it was used in religious discourse particularly in the commentaries of Tamil religious work — in the words of C. Raveendran ¹⁹ became a binding force among the commentators. In the both cases, namely Malayalam and Tamil, the growth and enrichment of Manipravala literature dependent entirely upon the attitude of the literary community towards Sanskrit. The hegemony of Sanskrit was challenged by the Tamil scholars asserting the superiority of Tamil, while the Tamil manipraval was never allowed to spread beyond the religious discourse, the Malayalam manipravala, on the other hand, developed into a flexible literary medium of various genres : *pattu*, *strotra*, *kilippattu* and *champu*. Both in quality and in quantity manipravala dominated the Malayalam literary activity. That it was a part of an elite culture or that it was resisted by several poets should not obscure one's understanding of the fact that this mixed language is an outcome of the negotiation of a powerful class between the language of the people and the language of a dominating elite. While describing the manipravala literature as the 'product of one of the most romantic periods in the history of Kerala', Parameswaran Nair points out that there is not a 'trace of the life of the ordinary people is discernible in it.' ²⁰ It was designed as an artificial literature composed in an artificial language. It flourished beside the folk poetry composed in simple and straightforward style on the one hand, and the kind of poetry that masters like Ezhuttacchan inaugurated as a challenge to its dominance on the other. The total poetic activity of Kerala was thus under a constant pressure of what maybe called literary bilingualism, Manipravala had finally declined not because of its devices of code-mixing, but because of its blind surrender to the hegemony of Sanskrit, only to prove as it were, a hybrid language can serve only a limited purpose.

The third instance of code-mixing comes from the attempts of sixteenth century poets belonging to eastern India and involving Maithili, Assamese, Bengali and Oriya. The Vaishnava poets of Eastern Indian cultivated the diction of the Maithili poets, particularly that of the great fifteenth century poet Vidyapati so intently and fondly that in course

of time they created a poetic language out of a clever and imaginative fusion of Maithili and the native speech of the poets. This came to be known as *Braja-buli* (the language of Braja) which is different from *Braj*, one of the members of the Hindi family of languages. This poetic speech conspicuously mellifluous and sweet was considered apposite by the Vaishnavas for the celebration of *Braja*, the playground of Krishna. Sukumar Sen writes that "this *Kunstsprache* in Bengal was thoroughly saturated by Bengali forms and idioms, and came to be known from the late eighteenth century as Brajabuli. In Orissa the imported diction was not fruitful ... In Assam Brajabuli thrived as much as in Bengal."²¹ One can describe this phenomenon as some kind of reincarnation of *manipravala*, the difference being that Brajabuli replaces the hegemonic Sanskrit by a *bhasa*, another young Indian language. Or in other words *manipravala* is a process, a device, which never disappeared from Indian literary scene. *Vandemataram* written in the last century, a song partly in Sanskrit, partly in Bengali, belongs to this *manipravala* tradition in respect of its structural features. An eighteenth century Bengali poet while narrating the conversation between the Mughal emperor and a Hindu general makes an extremely interesting observation about the suitability of the language for such occasion. The conversation — the actual and the historic one — was in Arabic or Persian, and the poet claims with unconcealed pride his competence in those languages. But he realises that employment of Arabic or Persian in a Bengali narrative would result in incomprehensibility. And therefore he proposes to use a mixed language, which he calls *yabanimisal*, a Bengali mixed with words of Perso-Arabic provenance. Many scholars feel that this might have been the beginning of a tradition of an Islamised Bengali. Texts written in that language is, interestingly, called *do-bhasi puthi* (bi-lingual books).

Without adducing more examples, it can be concluded with justification that the frequency and the pervasiveness of code-switching, code-mixing, code-juxtaposition with all their configurations that can be witnessed in the history of Indian literature are intimately connected with its multilingualism. The pressure of a multilingual society has its stresses, both covert and avert, on literary texts and consequently on the whole literature. The phenomenon can be explored with reference to the

psychology and the social compulsions on the part of the individual authors who switch from one language to another or writes in two languages almost simultaneously. A Premchand or an Annanda Sankar Roy are not notable exceptions but symbols of authors for whom bilingualism can be both a blessing and predicament. The choice of one language or the choice of a bilingual career on the part of the Indian author is determined by several factors, the readership, the language hierarchy and the language politics. But the most important thing is the social reality and the writers' response to it. The anxiety of a monolingual literary community is how to resist all intervention of foreign language in its literature because that threatens its homogeneity. Bilingual or multilingual communities by the very nature of its composition are not scared by the multiplicity of languages, and therefore not averse to the idea of multilingual literature. The Indian experiments with multilingual texts were sustained by the linguistic situation in the society which encouraged language mixing within the parameters of comprehension of the literary community. They were not exotic individual exercises like that of Salvatore of *The Name of the Rose* who spoke "the Babelish language of the first day after the divine chastisement, the language of primeval confession".²² *Henry V* is almost as isolated item, constructed by a genius, within the English literary traditions. It would have been a commonplace in Indian literature.

NOTES :

1. See Abhanga no. 263, *Sri Namadeva Gatha*, Maharashtra Sasan, Mumbai, 1970, p. 98. I am grateful to my colleague Dr. Lalita N. Mirajkar who had kindly provided me with the original poem and its English translation.

2. All these examples have been taken from the first two stories ('The Affair at the Victory Ball' and 'The Adventure of the Clapham Cook') included in *Poirot's Early Cases*, William Collins Sons and Co. Ltd., New York, 1974.

3. Madhav Julian (M. T. Patwardhan 1894-1939) was a gifted but controversial poet. See Deshpande, Kusumavati and Rajadhyaksha, M. V. *A History of Marathi Literature*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1988, pp. 136-37. The delicious irony of history is that Madhav Julian later on joined hands with V. D. Savakar and pleaded for 'purification' of Marathi.

4. All questions from *King Henry V* are to be found in the text edited by Andrew Gurr, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992.

5. See lines 46f. '*De foot, madame, et de cunt*'.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 36. But Gary Taylor, the editor of the Clarendon Press, Oxford edition of *Henry V* (1982) expresses strongly : "As both of Catherine's scenes have proved irresistible in the theatre, critical objections to them seem something of an impertinence", p. 71. Gurr points out, "the French term Katherine hears is *foutre*, to fuck. Alice's attempt to say 'gown' comes out as French *con*, English 'cunt'. Hence, says Katherine, 'O Seigneur Dieu, ils sont les mots de son mauvais, corruptible, gros et impudique, et non pour les dames d'honneur d'user!' (Oh Good heavens, those are words that sound wicked, corrupting, and rude, and not for ladies of honour to use).

7. Sadhan Parida, 'Bancibara Anyanama', *Samaroha* (August 1997), Bhubaneswar.

8. See Pravin Phukan, *Maniram Devan*, Lawyers Book Stall, Guwahati, 2nd ed., 1973. Mill uses broken Assamese with the native characters. The play, however, begins with a Hindi sentence spoken by Mill to the Orderly. The other Englishman in the play Holorid uses English and Assamese quite extensively, at times his role is more of an interpreter.

9. Arthur A. Macdonell, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, Delhi, 1958, p. 352.

10. M. Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, Vol. III, Delhi, 1985, p. 191.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 191.

12. *Kavya Mimamsa*, I, quoted in Ramaranjan Mukherji, *Literary Criticism in Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1966, p. 3.

13. See *Ankiya Nat*, ed. Birinchi Kumar Barua, Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies in Assam, Gauhati, 3rd ed., 1983.

14. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee writes, "The Buddhists for a time (2nd cen. B. C. - 3rd cen. A. C.) almost side by side with their literary work in Pali sought to approximate the Prakrits they were familiar with to Sanskrit as used by the Brahmans, and this resulted in the curious dialect called Gatha or Mixed Sanskrit or Buddhist Sanskrit, from its very nature a most artificial mix up, often with false Sanskritisation of Prakrit forms; and this is the language which is found in works like the 'Lalita-Vistara', the 'Maha-vastu', and the 'Divya-vadana'", *The Origin and Development of the Bengali Language*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1926, p. 53. For details see F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1953, rep. 1977.

15. T. Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, London, 1955, 2nd impression 1959, p. 61.

16. See Jean Filliozat, 'Sanskrit as a Link Language', *Proceedings of the First International Sanskrit Conference*, held in March 1972, ed. V. Raghavan, Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi, undated, pp. 263-73.

17. For details see P. K. Parameswaran Nair, *History of Malayalam Literature*, (tr. into English by E.M.J. Vinniyoor), Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1967, pp. 18-19, 23-24, 25-36, 53-60. Also Mu. Varadarajan, *A History of Tamil Literature* (tr. into English by E. Sa. Visswanathan), Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1988, pp. 11, 16, 20; also the entries on 'Manipravala' included in *Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature*, Vol. 3, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1989, pp. 2584-86.

18. *Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature*, op. cit., p. 2584.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 2585.

20. Parameswaran Nair, op. cit., p. 26.

21. Sukumar Sen, *History of Bengali Literature*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1960, p. 25; also Sen, *History of Brajabuli Literature*, Calcutta University, 1935.

22. See Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, tr. from the Italian (*Il nome della rosa*, 1980) by William Weaves, 1983, Picador, London. This remarkable work on the life of an abbey in Italy in the fourteenth century which uses Latin words, phrases and sentences along with Italian / English making the text an absolutely linguistic mosaic has also this character Salvatore, physically abnormal and almost sub-human, speaking a fantastic "language" which is a jumble of Italian, Provençal, Latin and various other dialects to which he had been exposed.